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Stars and Stripes illustration

ACCESS GRANTED

Despite employee objections, Microsoft says it will provide US military with 'all the technology we create'

By SAMANTHA MASUNAGA
Los Angeles Times

As tech companies such as Google wrestle with employee objections to working with the U.S. military, Microsoft Corp.'s president is throwing his company's support behind the Pentagon.

Microsoft is "going to provide the U.S. military with access to the best technology ... all the technology we create. Full stop," Brad Smith said Saturday during a panel at the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

Smith acknowledged that "there is some angst" in some workforces, including Microsoft's, about tech companies' involvement in military contracts.

In June, after thousands of employees voiced objections to a contract that allowed the military to use Google's artificial intelligence tools to analyze drone footage, Google decided not to renew the contract.

Smith said he wanted to quell such concerns. "We want Silicon Valley to know just how ethical and honorable a tradition the military has," he said.

The future and use of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems have broad implications, he said, and are "of importance to everybody and not just young people who happen to live on the West Coast."

Smith expressed openness to hearing his workers' opinions, saying that Microsoft would "engage to address the ethical issues that new technology is creating."

SEE MICROSOFT ON PAGE 6

Emails show input on VA by trio at Mar-a-Lago

By ISAAC ARNSDORF
ProPublica

Newly released emails about the three associates of President Donald Trump who secretly steered the Department of Veterans Affairs show how deeply the trio was involved in some of the agency's most consequential matters, most notably a multibillion-dollar effort to overhaul electronic health records for millions of veterans.

Marvel Entertainment Chairman Ike Perlmutter, West Palm Beach physician Bruce Moskowitz and lawyer Marc Sherman — part of the president's circle at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida — reviewed a confidential draft of a \$10 billion government contract for the electronic records project even though they lack any relevant expertise.

In preparing the contract, the agency consulted more than 40 outside experts, such as hospital executives, according to the records, which were released under the Freedom of Information Act. The Mar-a-Lago trio was listed among those experts. Perlmutter, a comic book tycoon, appears on the list between representatives from the University of Washington Medical Center, Intermountain Healthcare and Johns Hopkins University.

But none of the three men has served in the U.S. military or elsewhere in government, and none of them has expertise in health information technology or federal contracting.

The list is one of hundreds of newly released documents about the so-called Mar-a-Lago Crowd's sway over VA policy and personnel decisions. The records show them editing the budget for a government program, weighing in on job candidates and being treated as having decision-making authority on policy initiatives.

In a June 2017 email, a VA official identified Perlmutter alongside then-VA Secretary David Shulkin as "top principles [sic]." In another message, Moskowitz named himself, Perlmutter and Sherman to an "executive committee."

Since the role of the troika was exposed by ProPublica in August, lawmakers have called their influence "wildly inappropriate" and "textbook corruption and cronyism." A liberal veterans group sued to block them under a Watergate-era sunshine law on advisory committees. House Democrats and the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office said they would investigate.

SEE EMAILS ON PAGE 7

WAR/MILITARY

Phallic drawings found at US base; leader ousted

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Drawings of penises were found on vehicles, inside cockpits, in public restrooms, even outlined in dust, at the base where the 69th Bomb Squadron was deployed for about seven months, an investigation has found.

The squadron's commander at the time, Lt. Col. Paul Goossen, was fired from his job at Minot Air Base in North Dakota last week.

The investigation determined that Goossen and other senior leaders did not create or share inappropriate images. But Goossen did not do enough to stop the drawings among his deployed B-52 aircrews, the report concluded.

"The prevalent phallic drawings ... indicated a poor culture and climate, indicative of a deployed location with a melting pot of unit climates and cultures that accepted those type of inde-

cent drawings," the investigation said, finding Goossen "failed to be above reproach."

The Air Force released a redacted copy of the commander-directed investigation Friday, three days after Goossen was removed for failure to maintain a professional workplace environment.

The squadron's deployed location was redacted from the report. But the Air Force in an online article highlighted a holiday conference call that 15 airmen from the squadron, including Goossen, had with President Donald Trump last year on Christmas Eve while deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

The squadron was selected for the call out of several different deployed units because of its many accomplishments, the Air Force said then.

The squadron deployed at the end of August 2017, about three months after Goossen assumed command, according to the report.

The investigation began after a CD with the squadron's final roll-call presentation was discovered during a standard vehicle inspection of an "other country national," according to the report. The slides contained phallic artwork, which Goossen and the rest of the squadron had seen.

Phallic images were widespread on the base, showing up on dusty aircraft exteriors, in dorm rooms and inside the B-52 cockpit, the report said.

Goossen tried to put an end to the rampant penis drawings with a simple message written on a whiteboard: "Stop drawing [penises]."

But because Goossen didn't say to stop drawing inside the aircraft, aircrews continued to do so, the investigating officer concluded.

Between 10 and 25 squadron members were found to have drawn the images inside the deployed B-52s starting in October 2017.

"Aircrews believed the draw-

ings on the aircraft would be contained only to aircrews' viewing while flying on the aircraft and was meant to be a morale boost and joke to break from the monotonous routines encountered during that rotation," the report said.

A system inside the B-52 had drawing and editing software tools that allowed aircrews to create the images.

Crewmembers confirmed "it was common practice for aircrews to create what was commonly referred to as '[penis] pics' using the Microsoft Paint application in the B-52" display, noting the stick-figure drawings involved male genitalia incorporated into various themes. Some basic pencil sketches also were found under keyboards in the plane.

Aircrew members said the drawings would have stopped if anyone was offended.

Goossen, who tried to fly with all aircrew members at some point, saw a heart-themed phallic image on one mission but ignored the

picture and quickly changed the screen to the map and communications display, he said, according to the report. Goossen stated "he was focused on the mission and recent [redacted] threats." He later expressed his disappointment at the phallic drawing in the cockpit but did not address it further.

Goossen told the investigating officer that he knew his airmen were drawing cartoons to each other but he was unaware of the depth and detailed content.

Airmen did not report a negative climate or culture while deployed, and Goossen emphasized taking care of each other and focusing on the mission, the report said.

But at a commander's call in October, Goossen acknowledged his failure to stop the drawings while deployed despite the extreme mission stress, the report said.

The report did not say whether other airmen would be disciplined.

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Military spokesman: Airstrike killed ISIS commander in Syria

By LIZ SLY

The Washington Post

BEIRUT — A senior Islamic State commander involved in the execution of U.S. hostage Peter Kassig was killed in an airstrike in southeastern Syria on Sunday, the U.S. military said.

Col. Sean Ryan, a U.S. military spokesman, identified the Islamic State commander as Abu al-Umayyad and said he was killed in "precision strikes" in a desert

area known as Badiya.

The coalition had reason to suspect that Umayyad posed an "immediate threat" to coalition forces in the area, Ryan said in an emailed statement.

Umayyad was also "involved in the killing of American citizen and former U.S. Army Ranger Peter Kassig," the statement said, and was linked to or directly involved in executing several other prisoners.

Kassig, who changed his name

to Abdul-Rahman Kassig after he converted to Islam while in ISIS captivity, was executed at some point in November 2014, the year after he was taken hostage in Syria.

His captors released a video showing his decapitated head beside his body but did not include scenes of the actual execution, unlike with the other hostages they killed.

Umayyad is the first ISIS figure to be publicly identified as

having been involved in Kassig's execution.

Mohammed Emwazi had been the ringleader of a group of four ISIS fighters nicknamed "The Beasts" by their captives and was identified as the man who appeared in the video of the execution of American journalist James Foley in August 2014.

The U.S. military did not say how it knew Umayyad was involved in Kassig's killing or what role he may have played.

He was with several other ISIS members when the strikes were carried out, Ryan said.

In 2006-07, Kassig served in Iraq as a medic with the U.S. Army Rangers. At the time of his capture, he was volunteering as an aid worker in Syria, providing medical help and training to Syrians in areas hit hard by the country's war. He was on his way to the province of Deir al-Zour in eastern Syria when he was kidnapped by ISIS near the city of Raqqa.

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PACIFIC



THERON GODBOLD/Stars and Stripes

Members of The Sky Kings Saxophone Quartet perform at Cafe de Noel near Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Friday.

Air Force band Sky Kings performs off base in Tokyo

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A band of Air Force saxophone players debuted their side project Friday at a blues and jazz club near the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

The Sky Kings Saxophone Quartet count as members Ian B'Beirne, band leader and soprano sax; Derrick Newbold, alto sax; Jacob Wright, tenor sax; and Jeremiah True, baritone sax. Drummer Andrew Clemenson backs the quartet.

All five are musicians with the Air Force Band of the Pacific. Friday's performance was their first independent gig for a small crowd at Cafe de Noel, just outside the air base.

All five, stationed at Yokota, formed the Sky Kings as an outlet for their own music and to keep their skills sharp, True said. "It benefits us all to do this kind of thing and gives us a creative outlet," he said.

The Sky Kings expect to play again but have no definite dates lined up.

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Japan-based Marine found dead

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The Marine Corps is investigating an Iwakuni-based Marine's sudden death last week, a spokesman for the service told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

Gunnery Sgt. Efrain Martinez Jr., 34, of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, was found dead at his home on base Nov. 26, said Staff Sgt. Vitality Rusavsky, of Marine Aircraft Group 12 at Iwakuni.

Martinez was a KC-130 mechanic who served two tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and one tour in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He joined the Marines in 2002 and was a drill instructor from 2013 to 2016.

"VMGR-152 is deeply saddened by Gunnery Sgt. Martinez' passing," Lt. Col. Mitchell T. Maury, the commander of VMGR-152, said in a statement. "He was a Marines' Marine, and his legacy will carry on for years to come. The entire squadron mourns his loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and the multitude of Marines he has positively impacted throughout his career."

A memorial service was held Wednesday in his honor.

He is survived by his wife and four children.

Martinez's decorations included a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and four Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals.

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2 Army pilots respond to S. Korean helicopter crash

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Two Army Black Hawk pilots responded quickly after witnessing the deadly crash this past weekend of a South Korean firefighting helicopter.

Capt. Julia McKusick, 29, of Colleyville, Texas, and 1st Lt. Melissa Taylor, 25, of Topsfield, Mass., were heading north to a training exercise Saturday morning when they saw the South Korean chopper plunge into the Han River east of Seoul.

"We saw it flying pretty low," McKusick, who was the co-pilot, told Stars and Stripes on Monday in a telephone interview. "We were actually wondering why it was so low and then we saw it impact the water."

The Black Hawk crew hovered overhead while contacting the Seoul Air base traffic control tower, reporting the crashed helicopter's tail number and model.

"We were able to also identify that there were two survivors," said Taylor, who was the lead pilot. "We were really happy that we were in the right place at the right time."

McKusick said rescue boats arrived soon after the crash so they flew on to the field training exercise. "At that point, there were [South Korean] rescue assets inbound, so we actually wanted to make sure that we got out of the way," she said.

"Helicopters don't crash that often, and to see it and be first on the scene is pretty rare, but we're very glad we were able to at least help and get assets moving," she said.

The crashed helicopter — a Kamov KA-32 belonging to the Korea Forest Service — had left from Gimpo to put out a fire on



Courtesy of South Korea's Gangdong Fire Station

A Kamov KA-32 belonging to the Korea Forest Service apparently fell while trying to take water from the Han River on Saturday.

a mountain and apparently fell while trying to take water from the river, according to South Korean officials.

Search crews rescued two pilots and found a mechanic suffering apparent cardiac arrest. The three were taken to a nearby hospital where the mechanic was pronounced dead.

"We do want to pass on our condolences to the crew chief and his family. We're glad that rescue agencies were able to get there in time for the two pilots," Taylor said.

An official with the South Korean air base, speaking on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing, confirmed the Black Hawk pilots reported the crash and maintained contact with controllers until rescue crews arrived.

The crew, which included Sgt.

Tereon Dorsey, 32, of College Park, Ga., and Pfc. Shane Palitza, 19, of Frisco, Texas, is assigned to the 2-2 Assault Helicopter Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division.

Black Hawks are primarily used to transport troops, but the pilots said they also train to respond in case of emergencies.

"There's an assumed kinship between all aviators, regardless of whether they are Korean or American," battalion commander Lt. Col. Keith Sandoval said in a statement. "I feel fortunate Capt. McKusick and 1st Lt. Taylor were there to provide such a quick response and render whatever aid they could to our fellow Korean aviators."

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report. gamel.kim@stripes.com Twitter: @kingamel

Okinawa-based Marine to compete for USO global volunteer of the year honors

By CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An Okinawa-based Marine is up for global honors after being named the first USO Pacific volunteer of the year from the southern Japanese island prefecture.

Lance Cpl. Samuel Jackson-west — who devoted 480 off-duty hours at the Camp Foster USO over the past six months — was honored for his efforts during a Nov. 28 ceremony at the Okinawa Marine base. He was chosen over top volunteers in Korea, Guam, Hawaii and elsewhere in Japan.

His volunteer work included serving food, cleaning and assisting USO staff with activities.



CARLOS VAZQUEZ/Stars and Stripes

Lance Cpl. Samuel Jackson-west, of Combat Logistics Battalion 4, holds his USO Pacific volunteer of the year award at Camp Foster, Okinawa, on Friday.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to be recognized for doing a good deed, and simply to be an example to my peers that doing the

right thing never goes unseen," he told Stars and Stripes after receiving the award. "Helping other people pays off in the end."

The Atlanta native will compete against other top volunteers from the United States, Europe and Southwest Asia for the USO global volunteer of the year award. That award will be given at a time and date yet to be announced.

The USO depends on its more than 30,000 volunteers to keep its mission of providing programs, entertainment and services to servicemembers and their families at more than 200 locations worldwide, according to the organization's website.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

4th soldier dies of wounds from blast in Afghanistan

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Sgt. Jason Mitchell McClary became the fourth soldier to die of wounds from a blast last week in central Afghanistan, raising the toll from the deadliest incident for U.S. troops in the country this year, the Pentagon said Monday.

McClary, 24, of Export, Pa., died Sunday at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany from injuries he received in the Nov. 27 blast, which struck a convoy of U.S. and Afghan forces in Ghazni province's Andar district en route to battle Taliban fighters.

His wife of five years, who was with him in his final moments, said he was a patient father who loved to work on his Corvette with his oldest son, now 2. He would spend hours holding their youngest, now 11 months old, telling him how much fun cars were and that he would teach him everything he'd need to know.

"We would throw football together, work on cars together," Lillie McClary said via Facebook messenger on Monday. "He was such a playful person and he was my best friend and we did everything together. I have no regrets with him and he was truly an amazing husband and a huge blessing from God."

The Pentagon last week identi-

fied three other servicemembers killed in the blast as Green Berets Capt. Andrew Patrick Ross and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Michael Emond, both of the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group; and Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan Elchin, a special tactics combat controller assigned to the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

Jason McClary was one of three troops who, along with a U.S. contractor, had reportedly been wounded in the blast but had been medically evacuated. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colo.

McClary, an infantryman, was an up-armored vehicle gunner for Attack Company in 1st Battalion, Lt. Col. Christopher Roberts, his regimental commander, said in a statement.

"The Rock battalion expresses its deepest sympathies and condolences to the family and friends tragically affected by the loss of

Sgt. Jason McClary," said Roberts, referring to the battalion by its nickname. "He epitomizes what it is to be a professional, a warrior and a soldier."

McClary joined the Army in January 2014 and deployed to Iraq from May 2016 to January 2017 before being assigned to 1-38th Infantry Regiment in October of last year. He deployed to Afghanistan in April of this year.

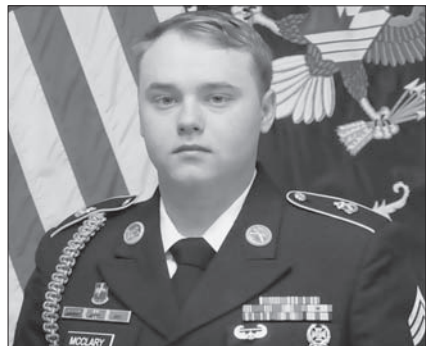
Lillie McClary posted on Facebook last week that her husband was in stable condition after undergoing surgery to fix a broken leg and broken wrist and a wound to his face. He was supposed to go back into surgery to repair his spine and femur, she wrote on Thursday.

"He is still stable and nothing has changed with that," she wrote. "He hasn't gotten worse or better but the good news is that is staying stable so that he can go through with all these procedures and hit the road to recovery as fast as possible."

She added that she was waiting on passports for herself and her

"He epitomizes what it is to be professional, a warrior and a soldier."

Lt. Col. Christopher Roberts
regimental commander



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Sgt. Jason Mitchell McClary, of Export, Pa., died Sunday in Landstuhl, Germany, of wounds sustained from an explosion Nov. 27 while serving in Afghanistan.

two boys to fly to Germany to be with her husband.

On Sunday, she wrote an update calling him "the most beautiful person I have ever met and we loved a lifetime's worth." She said he would leave a kiss in her hand when he would leave on deployment and tell her to save it for the day she really needed it.

"Today was that day," she wrote. "Thank you for our sons, thank you for being the best daddy and husband ever and thank you for choosing me to live this life with you and to love you every moment of it. You will always be in my heart and our sons will know that daddy was a hero and that you loved them so much. Rest with God my beautiful husband and I will see you soon."

She said via Facebook messenger that she and the boys arrived in Germany before his death.

"I was able to see him and I held his hand while he passed but I didn't want my children to see him like that," she said. "I wanted them to remember the way they've always known him, and he was always full of life and smiling."

The Taliban quickly claimed credit for the attack, which the Pentagon said is under investigation.

McClary's death brings to 14 the number of Americans who have died while supporting the U.S. operation in Afghanistan this year — 13 of them from combat.

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US envoy for Afghan peace embarks on multi-nation tour amid concerns in Kabul

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Zalmay Khalilzad, the diplomat heading America's peace efforts in Afghanistan, left Monday for an eight-country tour to discuss ways of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Khalilzad will travel to countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and the United Arab Emirates. He has already spoken multiple times with senior Taliban officials, according to statements by the militant group.

Khalilzad has been "patient, but in a hurry," said Robin Rafael, a former U.S. diplomat who served in Central Asia. In interviews, Khalilzad has said he hopes the Taliban and the Kabul government can reach a peace agreement before presidential elections next April.

A deal in the next four months would be much quicker than the five-year peace process envisioned by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who outlined his plan last week at a conference in Europe. Ghani said peace efforts must begin with talks between the Taliban and his Kabul government before expanding to include other nations.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, is shown during his time as the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan.

Ghani's plan is stymied by the Taliban's refusal to talk to the Kabul government, which it claims is an American puppet. U.S. officials have repeatedly said any talks with the Taliban would be a preamble to transferring those talks to their Afghan partners. But the fact that Ghani would publicly argue for a protracted peace process indicates a fundamental disagreement be-

tween Kabul and Washington, analysts said.

"The Ghani statements are a very clear, explicit signal that he is very frustrated with the course of negotiations and that there is significant distance between him and Khalilzad," said Vanda Felbab-Brown, senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

Khalilzad has floated the idea

of creating an interim government which the Taliban would join, according to a report by NBC. Such a prospect could create political problems for Ghani because some members of his government strongly oppose any power-sharing arrangement with the insurgents.

"The state you are trying to hold on to is in meltdown mode, even if you weren't dealing with the Taliban," said Kamran Bokhari, senior fellow with the Center for Global Policy in Washington.

A preliminary deal could be reached and then perfected over many years, Bokhari said. He cited a similar process that occurred in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in which Khalilzad oversaw talks that brought in anti-government factions. Such a peace process will require time, as the Taliban currently lack a political wing and would therefore not be able to integrate into the Kabul government, Bokhari said.

Complicating matters, the Taliban have maintained their hardline demands, saying in recent statements that the group will never agree to anything that does not follow its strict interpretation of Islamic principles.

Talks so far have been over basic issues, a Taliban spokes-

man told Stars and Stripes. Real talks can begin only once foreign troops have left the country.

"There will not be a chance for Afghans to sit and have talks and reach a solution if there are foreign troops in the country," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. "We are not tired of war. We can make more sacrifices."

Unnamed U.S. officials told NBC that they assume President Donald Trump will pull troops out from Afghanistan before the 2020 elections. Analysts said the flurry of recent diplomatic activity by the U.S. is a sign Trump wants a deal fast — even if that is not ideal.

"Pursuing peace talks with your foot on the accelerator makes for bad policy," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia program at the Wilson Center in Washington. Kugelman said peace deals can sometimes take decades.

If the Taliban continues to expand its control of the country, "then Washington is setting itself up for failure with its accelerated effort to launch talks and complete a deal," he said.

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MILITARY

Navy's mission in Mideast gets new leader

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Vice Adm. Jim Malloy, the deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy, is slated to take command this week of the Navy's mission in the Middle East, leading sailors in Bahrain in the wake of the sudden death of a three-star admiral.

Vice Adm. Scott Stearney, who led U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet, was found dead at his Bahrain home Saturday. A private memorial was being planned on the Navy's base in Bahrain, officials said Monday.

Navy officials declined to comment on reports by CBS News and USNI News, which cited unnamed defense officials stating Stearney died in an apparent suicide.

While Stearney's death is under investigation, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said Saturday no foul play was suspected.

Richardson tapped Malloy — now en route to Bahrain — soon after Stearney's death to assume temporary command.

Meanwhile, 5th Fleet sailors continue to carry out operations in a region where countering Iran and ensuring freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf is one of the command's top priorities.

"Scheduling has not been affected; fleet is continuing operations," said Cmdr. Josh-



MATT BODENNER/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Vice Adm. Scott Stearney, center, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces, is rendered honors on the destroyer USS Jason Dunham at Manama, Bahrain, on Oct. 24. Stearney died Saturday.

ua Frey, spokesman for U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

Gen. Joseph Votel, U.S. Central Command chief, said Sunday he was confident the sailors would carry out their missions, but that it would be with "heavy hearts."

Stearney, described by Richardson as a "decorated naval warrior" and a "devoted husband and father," assumed command of 5th Fleet in May. Upon taking command, Stearney said he was ready to work with partners "to keep conflict out of the mari-

time and promote security and stability."

The 5th Fleet area of operations stretches from the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to the Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The region includes three strategic shipping choke points: the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb, at the southern tip of Yemen.

Stearney earned his commission in 1982 after graduating from the University of Notre Dame. He graduated from the prestigious Navy Fighter Weapons School, popularly known as TOPGUN, where he later served as an instructor.

Stearney flew the F/A-18 Hornet in multiple squadrons and served aboard the aircraft carriers USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS George Washington and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. He also served in Afghanistan as chief of staff of Joint Task Force 435, which advises Afghan security forces.

His flag assignments included tours as commander, U.S. Transportation Command's Joint Enabling Capabilities Command; commander, Strike Force Training Atlantic; commander, Carrier Strike Group 4; commander, Navy Warfare Development Command; and director of operations, U.S. Central Command.

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Britain opens 1st naval facility in Bahrain to aid US in Persian Gulf

By JOSHUA KARSTEN

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — British sailors are working side by side with the U.S. Navy in Bahrain, where the United Kingdom's only forward-deployed naval facility is now up and running as the key U.S. ally boosts its global military presence.

The base, which houses up to 500 British troops and supports U.K. and joint maritime operations in the region, serves as a logistics hub for missions stretching from the Red Sea to the Far East.

"Any Royal Navy ship that enters our area of operations, we look after her whether it's counterterrorism, counterdrug smuggling, counterweapons smuggling or any of these combined maritime security operations," base spokesman Lt. Guy Wadge told Stars and Stripes.

Often, the mission mixes working with U.S. naval forces in Bahrain as the allies pool resources and train together to develop mine countermeasures and ensure freedom of navigation in an area where Iran looms large.

"Anything that involves the U.K. and U.S., we sit in the same office, we chat and we get our lines ahead straight," Wadge said.

While the British mission in Bahrain is closely aligned with the U.S., there are differences in how the forces carry out their missions — both at sea and on base.

Bahrain is positioned near waterways from Iraq to Iran, and along the base home and share four barracks with deployed personnel.

of the world's busiest shipping corridors, has been a flashpoint, and Tehran threatened to shut the waterway down.

When it comes to countering Iran in the region, the U.S. has sent its ships in recent years into the strait, with the goal of ensuring freedom of navigation.

"We've got a different methodology of achieving those end states," Wadge said of the U.K.'s response, which instead of shows of strength focuses on exercises to display preparedness.

Home to U.S. Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and U.K. Maritime Component Command, the Brits new pier-side facility berths include four mine countermeasure vessels and a support auxiliary ship similar to a Military Sealift Command replenishment ship.

A growing number of British ship movements prompted the U.K. to set up the base, built on land turned over to the U.S. Navy after Bahrain gained its independence from Britain in 1971.

British sailors deploy on four-, six- or nine-month rotations and enjoy bits of home steps away from the docks.

The perks come complete with a cafe, game room, Wi-Fi, dining facility, shoppette, gym and a soccer field. Sailors can send letters home in a traditional red post box and listen to their own British Forces Radio station, hosted daily onsite by a British DJ. Currently, an average of 120 permanent troops call the base home and share four barracks with deployed personnel.



JOSHUA KARSTEN/Stars and Stripes

British Royal Navy mine hunter the HMS Shoreham sits pier-side at the U.K.'s new Naval Support Facility Bahrain.

Unlike their American counterparts, the British troops may grow beards and enjoy later curfews. They also get livestreamed Premier League soccer games.

While the Americans may bring families to Bahrain, all British tours are unaccompanied, and senior members live in the barracks alongside junior ranks. The only British member residing off base is the commodore, according to the command spokesman. There are no plans to lengthen or allow accompanied assignments, as the rotations are treated as deployments.

"We live on base, which affects everything, but life on camp is quite good," said Lt. Callum Robertson, a British army officer from Gibraltar. "The amenities are very good. The gym is fantas-

tic, do a lot of [exercise]. Food is pretty decent; the chefs do a good job. And stuff's been developing as I've been here ... so we've got everything we need, all the crucial comforts from the U.K."

As for life out in town, Robertson and his team enjoy access to British expat clubs, sporting events and cultural experiences.

"I quite like the different culture and getting to see how Bahrainis live, what they do," Robertson said. "It's interesting to be in a different country and see a different lifestyle to what I'd experience in the U.K. or Gibraltar."

The British site offers a small medical clinic but relies on the American clinic or Bahraini hospitals for anything more than first aid. Wadge said most sailors love using the main exchange store on

the American side to stock up on essentials.

The British have some ongoing construction to accommodate another frigate, which will be permanently based in Bahrain next year. A helicopter landing pad also is in the works, Wadge said.

The aim, Wadge said, is to better shape events in the region in tandem with the U.S. military.

"Quite often, the U.S. and Royal Navy align themselves closely," Wadge said. "We are out here specifically to influence events that happen in the region, to encourage and stabilize it, because stability is one of those things that affects processes and businesses around the world."

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MILITARY

Migrant deaths cited at seminar to assist Africa

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The 76 migrants from Libya who drowned in June when their boat capsized in the Mediterranean Sea represent the human trafficking, corruption and political instability in parts of Africa that require international cooperation to overcome, the Navy's top commander in Europe and Africa said Monday.

Human traffickers take advantage of illegal immigration and corrupt African officials who take bribes to look the other way, which is why 117 migrants made a perilous crossing in a faulty boat that sank, said Adm. James Foggo, commander of Naval Forces Europe and Africa, at a seminar on how to strengthen Africa's maritime security.

"They all had tragic stories to tell, particularly the women about the way they were treated along the way," Foggo said, referring to survivors' stories about

their experiences. "The problem is broader than somebody paying money to get on a boat and try to get safe haven in Europe. It's about the smugglers and traffickers facilitating this."

It's also a failure of their governments to protect them and provide them with a means to feed their families, he said.

The U.S. and its allies must help African nations achieve greater stability, stronger rule of law and economic prosperity to combat the criminal elements, he added.

Delegates from 28 countries are attending the weeklong seminar in Naples, including Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, head of U.S. Africa Command. It opened on Monday.

The seminars used to be every two years but now will take place every 18 months, said Capt. John Perkins, spokesman for Naval Forces Europe and Africa.

The next conferences is to improve partnerships between the U.S., Europe and Africa so



SCOTT WYLAND/Stars and Stripes

Adm. James Foggo, commander of Naval Forces Europe and Africa, gives a presentation to delegates from 28 nations on improving maritime security in Africa on Monday at the Navy's base in Naples, Italy.

they can better police the waters around the continent and tackle problems such as human trafficking and terrorism. Then the countries are in a better position to prevent incidents such as the migrant drowning, Foggo said.

The UNSN Trenton rescued 42 migrants after their boat capsized,

but six survivors told an Italian newspaper that they tried to flag down the Trenton hours earlier while the boat was still afloat and the ship didn't respond.

The survivors' testimonies indicate their boat capsized between 2 and 3 a.m., which means it would have been dark when they tried to

signal the Trenton, making it difficult for the crew to spot a small boat in rough seas, Military Sealift Command said.

"We did everything humanly possible," Foggo said.

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Army sergeant sentenced to life with no parole for killing his wife in Md.

By CATHERINE RENTZ
The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — A federal judge in Baltimore sentenced Army Sgt. Malik Kearney to life in prison without parole Friday for killing his wife.

Kearney also was sentenced to an additional 10 years in prison for the use of a firearm in commission of a crime. He will be required to pay about \$490,000 in restitution to the couple's daughter and his late wife's mother.

Kearney, 37, was convicted in August of the federal crime of crossing state lines to commit domestic violence resulting in death. U.S. District Judge George L. Russell III said the crime was not a "heat of the moment" killing. "This was cold-blooded and calculated," he said.

Kearney's wife, Karyln Ramirez, 24, was an Army private stationed at Fort Meade, Md.

Prosecutors said Kearney drove seven hours from his home in South Carolina to kill Ramirez on Aug. 24, 2015. He showed a rifle against her body and fired three times — once into her side, twice into her chest. She was shot at point-blank range to muffle the sound. Kearney then placed her baby beside her. Maintenance workers called police after finding an open glass door at her townhouse in Severn, Md.

During Kearney's trial, prosecutors detailed his plan with his mistress, Dolores Delgado, 33, of Florida, to kill Ramirez, cover their tracks and stage her death to look like a sexual assault. Police found Ramirez with her underwear pulled down to her ankles. Their 4-month-old daughter was found abandoned, but unharmed, beside her dead body.

Delgado testified as a government witness. She told jurors she tracked her mileage to help Kearney determine how much gas he would need to drive from South Carolina to Maryland. She bought two 5-gallon gas cans, she said, so he wouldn't have to stop at a gas station and risk being seen. Delgado said she lent him her Nissan Altima, which was less conspicuous than his Jaguar.

She said she later burned his clothes and threw away the revolver off a fishing pier in Florida.

Delgado pleaded guilty last year to the same federal crime. She was sentenced in September to 17 years in federal prison for helping Kearney kill his wife.

The judge said Kearney was in a relationship not just with Delgado, but with others at the time that he killed his wife. He said Kearney had "predatory behavior" when it came to women.

Kearney and Ramirez had been married the month before Ramirez was killed, but their

marriage was already falling apart. Both had been unfaithful, prosecutors said in his trial.

They said Ramirez wanted a divorce and that she blocked his phone number and sought a protective order from the Army. Kearney was enraged, texting her more than 900 times over two days, prosecutors said.

"I am just getting hulk mad," he texted her.

Teresa Whalen, Kearney's attorney, pleaded with the judge for a sentence of less than life, saying that Kearney served four tours of duty in the Army, including one in Pakistan and three in Iraq. She said he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder from injuries he incurred while serving in Iraq. She also described a childhood of abandonment in Philadelphia, where Kearney grew up between foster homes.

Kearney spoke before the sentencing, telling Ramirez and her family that "I know the pain and heartache that you feel," and that he loves and misses his wife.

Russell said Kearney had seven hours to think about what he was doing while driving from South Carolina to Maryland before he killed his wife. He told Kearney that he showed no sign of remorse for his conduct and that his words about his late wife "ring hollow."

"I don't believe you," Russell said.

Microsoft: Defense Innovation Unit director says many firms want to work with the military

FROM FRONT PAGE

He recalled an email he received from an employee who grew up in Belgrade, Serbia — which was bombed by NATO forces in 1999 — that said the employee needed to think through Microsoft's reasoning for working with military contracts. Smith said he understood the employee's background would lead to such hesitation.

But he did not mention Microsoft taking any action or changing any policy as a result.

Other tech industry executives pushed back against the idea that Silicon Valley workers are less inclined to work with the Defense Department solely because of cultural differences or qualms about the moral implications.

"It's much more an economics issue," said Rachel Olney, founder and chief executive of geographic location data start-up Geosite.

'It's much more an economics issue.'

Rachel Olney
founder and chief executive of Geosite

"Dealing with the U.S. government is extremely time-consuming" and often doesn't provide the same kind of profits as commercial work," she said.

The DOD has established the Defense Innovation Unit, which is intended to provide capital — without taking an ownership stake — to companies that want to work on prototype projects that help address problems faced by the U.S. military.

Despite the pushback from employees at Google on the Project Maven artificial intelligence contract, Defense Innovation Unit director Michael Brown said his agency has gotten more responses from commercial companies that are interested in working with the U.S. military.

Separately at Saturday's event, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson told reporters that development of the new B-21 bomber is on schedule. She acknowledged that it was still early in the program, but "we are pleased with how that program is going forward."

The Air Force's next-generation stealth bomber is being built by prime contractor Northrop Grumman Corp. at its plant in Palmdale, Calif.

VETERANS

Hanks: Current wars hard to portray in movies

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Tom Hanks, who starred in a blockbuster film about World War II and later produced two miniseries about that war, doesn't think Hollywood is best suited to tell stories about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 17-year-old war in Afghanistan, in which many servicemembers have served multiple deployments, is difficult to portray in movies confined by plot lines with clear chronologies, protagonists and antagonists, Hanks said. The actor spoke about the issue Thursday at an event in Washington hosted by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, which benefits caregivers of wounded and ill veterans.

"I don't know that Hollywood could create as authentic a story about Iraq or Afghanistan or people on their fourth, fifth, sixth tours of duty that couldn't be told much, much better by a documentary or caring news media," he said. "It's a tough thing."

"We argue about it all the time: 'What is going to be the best

venue for the story?' And many, many times, it is not a Hollywood movie, it's something else. The trick there is how do you get eyeballs on it?"

Hanks was nominated for an Academy Award for his role as Army Capt. John Miller in the 1998 film "Saving Private Ryan," which was set in France during WWII. Later, he helped write, direct and produce the HBO miniseries "Band of Brothers," a dramatization of actions in WWII by "Easy" Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He also worked behind the scenes on "The Pacific," a companion series to "Band of Brothers" that focused on the Marine Corps in the Pacific theater during WWII.

For his portrayal in "Saving Private Ryan," Hanks received an honorary induction into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame.

"I think in Hollywood, the best thing anyone can do is to tell the true story, to be authentic about it and not mythologize — make it easier than it really is or make it worse than it really is," Hanks

said about Hollywood portrayals of veterans and servicemembers.

He's working on another war drama set during WWII, "Greyhound," expected to be released in 2019, is based on the novel "The Good Shepherd" by C.S. Forester that follows a Navy destroyer during the Battle of the Atlantic. Hanks is starring in the film, as well as helping write and produce it.

Earlier this year, the movie creators were seeking servicemembers and veterans to act as extras playing Navy crewmen.

Hanks has been involved in several military and veterans initiatives since "Saving Private Ryan." On Thursday, he was honored by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for his work with Hidden Heroes, the foundation's campaign to aid veteran caregivers. He helped launch the campaign in 2016.

As more injured servicemembers transition out of the military, more caregivers will need help, Hanks said.

"This marks the start of work that is going to be going on for a generation," he said.

Hanks also helped raise funds for the National World War II Memorial, and he's on the advisory committee for the memorial to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was commander of the Allied forces in Europe during WWII.

Also, he's involved with veterans in other ways. For example, Hanks starred in Shakespeare's Henry IV at the West Los Angeles Medical Center this year. Forty veterans were hired to help with the production.

Last year, he narrated a national public service announcement about veteran suicide, encouraging people to reach out to veterans in crisis.

On Thursday, he had a warning for others in Hollywood who might attempt to portray veterans: Don't stereotype them.

"I don't think there's any more stereotypical character than a twisted veteran who's never going to be the same," Hanks said. "The reality is, when you talk to people and hear these stories, people are just trying to get on with the rest of their lives."

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MEREDITH TIBBETTS/Stars and Stripes

Former Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-M.C., and actor Tom Hanks answer questions from the press Thursday in Washington.

Emails: Source says Mar-a-Lago Crowd displeased with Wilkie, VA's release of emails

FROM FRONT PAGE

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has reportedly distanced himself from the trio. His spokesman, Curt Cashour, blamed previous leaders.

"Although his predecessors may have done things differently, Sec. Wilkie has been clear about how he does business," Cashour said in a statement. "No one from outside the administration dictates VA policies or decisions — that's up to Sec. Wilkie and President Trump. Period."

But that posture carries risk for Wilkie; his predecessor was fired after losing favor with the Mar-a-Lago Crowd.

A representative of Perlmutter, Moskowitz and Sherman declined to comment, as did Shulkin and the VA.

Before they could review the government contract in March 2018, Perlmutter, Sherman and Moskowitz had to sign nondisclosure agreements, according to the newly released records. Sherman said the agreement to allow him, Perlmutter and Moskowitz to discuss the details with one another and with the president or other administration officials, according to the emails.

The newly released emails also detail Moskowitz's effort to get the VA and Apple to adapt his app. As a VA information technology official described it in a May 2017 email, "We are utilizing the native iOS mobile app, Emergency Medical Care Tracker, that Dr. Moskowitz developed."

VA health officials offered their own ideas for how a collaboration with Apple could benefit veterans, such as working on credentialing, data exchange and analytics and suicide prevention research. But Moskowitz rejected the VA

doctors' ideas in favor of his own. "These are good areas but not the emergency ones which my group of experts have identified," he said in a May 2017 email. "I sent an email to outline the recommendations."

Darin Selnick, a VA official who previously signed onto a 2016 proposal to dismantle the agency's government-run health service, agreed with Moskowitz's low estimation of the VA doctors' input.

'Limited knowledge'

"The VA staff has limited knowledge and experience, which is why you and the academic medical centers 'are so important to help the VA move forward,'" Selnick wrote.

Selnick, who is now a special adviser to Wilkie, was the point person working with Moskowitz on the app, the emails show. "I like you are the implementer for VA," he told Moskowitz in March 2017.

When Selnick said the VA's IT division could start working on the app, Moskowitz replied, "We need our specialist." He then connected Selnick with his son, Aaron, and Selnick introduced Aaron Moskowitz to Apple. (Aaron Moskowitz's name is redacted from the emails, but his involvement was confirmed by four people familiar with the matter. He didn't respond to a request for comment.)

VA officials identified major problems with the app's usability and functionality. "Some of the code needs to start working or, at the very least, not even rebuilt," the IT official said in the May email.

Nevertheless, Aaron Moskowitz joined a June 2017 conference call with executives from top medical systems and from Apple, as the foundation's director, according to tax filings.

for five to seven minutes, according to the emails. After the call, Moskowitz named his son as one of the project's "mid-level project managers."

In preparation for the conference call, Apple employees and Moskowitz circulated a memo that assessed Moskowitz's proposals, which were identified as coming from "the VA and the White House." In the memo, Apple's experts pushed back on Moskowitz's app, saying the VA's website already offered a similar tool and that the national databases needed to make the app accurate didn't exist. The memo encouraged pursuing a different idea (giving veterans a way to store their health data on their cellphones), which it said would "achieve the greatest benefit for veterans in the shortest amount of time."

Apple spokesman Josh Rosenstock didn't answer requests for comment.

Months later, Moskowitz fumed that the Apple partnership didn't go his way. "We had an excellent group assembled on the call with Tim Cook," he said in a March 2018 email. "The VA dropped all contact and proceeded on its own. So now we have a product of limited value."

'Participating partner'

Moskowitz also used his influence at the VA to get the agency to convene a meeting on registries for medical devices. Moskowitz started a foundation (whose board included Perlmutter's wife) that lobbied medical institutions to start such registries so patients could be notified of recalls. Aaron Moskowitz drew a \$60,000 salary as the foundation's director, according to tax filings.

The VA already had a system to notify patients within 10 days of a recall, with a 99 percent success rate, according to internal emails. And the Food and Drug Administration already has a nationwide program to track medical devices.

Nevertheless, Moskowitz spurred the VA to organize a conference on the subject, with extensive input from him and his son, according to notes from weekly 7:30 a.m. planning calls. Planning documents named Moskowitz's foundation as a "participating partner" and a "private interest."

Moskowitz even had say over the conference's budget. In an April 2018 email, the VA official running the effort said, "I owe Dr. Moskowitz a budget — Bruce and I are editing it." Cashour, the VA spokesman, declined to say how much the program cost.

The Mar-a-Lago Crowd's interventions sometimes bumped into each other. Once, in May 2017, Wilkie's son tried to schedule a call about the Apple partnership. Moskowitz replied that the time conflicted with another call he had with the acting head of the VA's health division.

When Wilkie first met the Mar-a-Lago Crowd, they seemed to get along.

"For the first time in 1½ years, we feel everyone is on the same page," Perlmutter said in an email after the meeting at Mar-a-Lago in April. "Everybody gets it."

The personal, close relationship, thanking the men for providing a foundation to build on.

"I was honored to visit with you," wrote Wilkie, who at the time was the acting secretary. "No matter how long I am here, there is a template in place based on your efforts to move this institution out

of the Industrial Age."

(That last sentence was redacted when the VA originally disclosed the email to ProPublica under the Freedom of Information Act; the agency cited an exemption for internal deliberations. After ProPublica challenged that redaction, the VA released the full message.)

A fraying relationship

But since that initial meeting in April, Wilkie's relationship with the Mar-a-Lago Crowd has frayed. Under pressure from lawmakers after ProPublica's investigation, Wilkie said in September that his team cut off contact with the trio.

The loss of access has stung Perlmutter, according to a person close to the administration. But Perlmutter remains close to Trump. He spent election night with him and saw him over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend at Mar-a-Lago.

The person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe confidential discussions, said Perlmutter has begun criticizing Wilkie — as he had Wilkie's predecessor, Shulkin, before the president fired him.

Perlmutter faults Wilkie, the person said, for snubbing Perlmutter's calls and for sidelining one of his top allies, former acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke. Additionally, the person said, Perlmutter is displeased with the agency's releasing emails about him and Shulkin, with the course of its electronic health records overhaul.

"It's very clear that Ike is going to war against Wilkie in a similar way to the way he did against Shulkin," the person familiar with the matter said. "It's gotten that bad."

NATION

Trump-Xi agreement buys time in trade war

By PAUL WISEMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The dinner table diplomacy that President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping conducted over the weekend produced something as vague as it was valuable: an agreement to keep talking.

Forged over grilled sirloin at the Group of 20 summit Saturday in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the ceasefire Trump and Xi agreed to Saturday night illustrated that the leaders of the world's two largest economies can at least find some common ground, however tentative and ill-defined it might be. The truce pulled the United States and China back from an escalating trade war that was threatening world economic growth and had set global investors on edge.

"The prospects for real progress on substantive issues with China are now better than at any point in the Trump administration," said Andy Rothman, investment

strategist at Matthews Asia.

What Trump and Xi achieved was the gift of additional time — 90 days, at least — to try to resolve the thorny and complicated issues that divide them. Most important among them, and perhaps the most intractable, is the U.S. argument that Beijing has deployed predatory tactics in a headlong drive to overtake America's global supremacy in high technology.

Yet reaching a permanent peace will hardly be easy. The Trump administration asserts, and many experts agree, that China systematically steals trade secrets and forces the U.S. and other foreign countries to hand over sensitive technology as the price of admission to the vast Chinese market.

Washington also regards Beijing's ambitious long-term development plan, "Made in China 2025," as a scheme to dominate such fields as robotics and electric vehicles by unfairly subsidizing Chinese companies and discriminating against foreign competitors.



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

President Donald Trump listens to China's President Xi Jinping speak during their bilateral meeting at the G-20 summit on Saturday in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

This year, Trump imposed an import tax of 25 percent on \$50 billion in products, then hit an additional \$200 billion worth of goods with 10 percent tariffs. Those 10 percent tariffs were scheduled to ratchet up to 25 percent on Jan. 1 if the United States and China failed to reach an agreement to at least postpone that move.

In Buenos Aires, they did reach such an

accord. Trump agreed to delay the scheduled U.S. tariff increase for 90 days while the two sides negotiate over the administration's technology-related complaints.

In return, China agreed to buy what the White House called a "not yet agreed upon, but very substantial" amount of U.S. products to help narrow America's gaping trade deficit with China.

For Trump, low drama on G-20 trip, signs of acceptance

By CATHERINE LUCEY
AND ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — If there has been a constant to President Donald Trump's tumultuous first two years in office, it has been that his foreign trips have tended to be drama-filled affairs — the president barreling through international gatherings like a norm-smashing bull, disrupting alliances and upending long-standing U.S. policies. But at this year's Group of 20 summit, Trump appeared to settle in among his global peers.

A brisk two days in Argentina saw Trump reach a trade ceasefire with China and sign a three-way trade deal with Mexico and Canada. With little public spectacle,

he joined the leaders of the other member nations on the traditional group statement. He buddied up with traditional allies and largely avoided controversial strongmen. Faced with Russia's spiking aggression in Ukraine, he canceled his sit-down with Vladimir Putin. And when former President George H.W. Bush died, Trump gave respectful remarks and canceled what would likely have been a raucous press conference.

All told, for the often-undisciplined leader, the whirlwind trip was an unusual moment of Zen.

Trump's election forced the world to reckon with sweeping populist movements and the impact of globalization. In the first two years of his presidency, he has brusquely rejected international engagement for what he views as a single-minded focus on U.S. na-

tional interests.

Public and private interactions with world leaders over his 48 hours in Argentina demonstrated Trump does have the capacity for restraint. And other world leaders, for their part, showed grumbling acceptance of Trump's untraditional stylings.

It's hardly as though Trump has suddenly abandoned his "America First" world view. But rather than challenge him at every turn, other leaders appear to be adapting to Trump, mindful that multilateral deals are weaker without the United States.

Delegation "sherpas" worked through the night to revamp the joint communiqué so it would be amenable to Trump, and allies knew to butter Trump up with over-the-top praise.

The G-20 joint statement in-

cluded U.S.-preferred language on reforming the World Trade Organization — something Trump demanded — and made note that the U.S. opposed the Paris climate agreement, which the president has announced plans to exit.

French President Emmanuel Macron called it a victory that the U.S. signed onto the statement at all, given the tensions going into the talks. He said, "With Trump, we reached an agreement. The U.S. accepted a text."

But Trump, for his part, played the role of gracious visitor, proclaiming that he and Trudeau, along with outgoing Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, were battle-tested friends.

Most notably, Trump largely kept his distance from Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He made small talk

with the two strongmen but toed the line on a Western freeze-out of the pair — the former over Russia's recent seizure of three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews, and the latter over the murder two months ago of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In previous global summits, the shock factor invariably came from Trump.

This time, the viral moment of the weekend came when Putin and the crown prince, the two relative outcasts of the summit, exchanged an enthusiastic handshake.

The president arrived back in the United States early Sunday, with a week of mourning for Bush ahead, a government funding fight on the horizon and more to come from the Russia investigation. The question now, as always, is just how long can this moment last?

Synagogue holds Hanukkah ceremony at mass shooting site

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Sunday's public lighting of a Menorah outside a Pittsburgh synagogue where 11 people were killed in a mass shooting was an opportunity to honor the dead, mark Hanukkah's theme of survival and allow the community to reinforce its solidarity.

"To me, it's a simple message: The light is the message," Rabbi Jeffrey Myers said, pointing to the Menorah standing at the corner where a makeshift memorial for the 11 victims once stood and was visited by thousands paying their respects.

Five weeks after the massacre — believed to be the deadliest attack on Jews in the U.S. about



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

People watch as a Menorah is lit at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on the first night of Hanukkah on Sunday.

500 people gathered outside Tree of Life to pray, sing songs and witness the lighting of the Menorah.

"We are practicing our Jewish faith publicly and proudly," said Stephen Cohen, co-president of

New Light, whose congregation, along with congregants from Dor Hadash and Tree of Life, had gathered at the synagogue when the shooting occurred Oct. 27.

The fact that hundreds of people showed up for the ceremony came as no surprise to officials of the three congregations.

"I don't think there are enough adjectives to describe the community support," said Myers, who was leading Shabbat services at Tree of Life synagogue Oct. 27, when the shooting occurred.

"We're such a tight-knit community," said Ilana Kohnanbach, who attended the Menorah lighting with her husband, Jason. "It's also a wake-up call for what we need to do to keep our faith, and

(that) we need to take precautions. It could happen to anybody."

The suspected shooter, Robert Bowers, raged against Jews during and after the shooting, authorities said. He remains jailed without bail, and has pleaded not guilty to numerous murder and hate crime charges.

The Menorah lighting comes less than a week after the end of Shoshim, a 30-day mourning period observed by Jews following a death.

"We all begin the process of moving forward," said Ellen Surloff, president of Dor Hadash. "You move forward one day at a time. You have good days and some not-so-good days."

NATION

Rare December tornadoes hit central states

1 killed in Mo.; Ill., Okla. and Ark. also affected

Associated Press

TAYLORVILLE, Ill. — Residents in central Illinois on Sunday assessed the damage after rare December tornadoes, including one the day before that was a half-mile-wide, ripped roofs off homes, downed power lines and injured at least 20 people.

The severe weather in Illinois was part of a line of thunderstorms that raked areas of the central U.S. late Friday and into Saturday, killing one person in Missouri. The National Weather Service confirmed tornadoes in Illinois, Missouri and Oklahoma.

At least three tornadoes were confirmed in northwest and southwest Arkansas, which largely caused property and structural damage. No injuries or fatalities were reported.

Peak months for tornadoes in much of the Midwest are April and June, according to the weather service. But at least 12 tornadoes were reported in Illinois on Saturday, including one in Taylorville that has been confirmed. If the majority are confirmed, that would be the most tornadoes in Illinois in a December storm since Dec. 18-19, 1957, when there were 21.

The weather service sent crews Sunday to survey the hardest-hit areas in Illinois, which included Taylorville, 25 miles south-east of Springfield.



TED SCHURTER, THE (SPRINGFIELD, ILL.) STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER/AP

Tiffani Bailey carries an enlarged wedding photo of her grandparents, **Charles and Betty Bailey**, from the debris of her destroyed home in Taylorville, Ill. Bailey was in the trailer with her son and mom when it was hit by a tornado Saturday.

Photographs and video from Taylorville showed several houses flattened, with residents wading into debris to salvage what they could. Some homes remained standing but with gaping holes in the roofs or with no roofs at all.

The tornado was on the ground for around

10 miles before it thundered through Taylorville, and the weather service was able to warn residents of its arrival 41 minutes before it struck, Chris Miller, a meteorologist at the service's Lincoln office, said in a phone interview Sunday.

That advance warning gave people criti-

cal time to take cover and may have saved lives.

Assistant Fire Chief Andy Goodall, speaking to reporters Saturday night shortly after the storm pounded the city of 11,000, said at least 100 homes had major damage, including his own, Springfield's State Journal-Register reported.

A Taylorville Memorial Hospital spokesman said 21 people, from age 9 to 97, arrived for treatment Saturday. Most were released within hours. Miller said three people remained hospitalized as of Sunday afternoon.

Miller said preliminary estimates are that the Taylorville tornado may have been an EF2, which indicates wind speeds as high as 135 mph. It could take several more days to know for sure.

The weather service said Sunday that a strong tornado that developed from severe thunderstorms Friday night touched down in Van Buren, Ark. It was rated an EF2.

About 10 minutes later, a second weaker tornado was confirmed less than 10 miles away near the town of Rudy, Ark.

Damage surveys for the two tornadoes are ongoing but officials said dozens of homes were damaged.

Early Saturday morning, a third tornado with estimated peak winds of 107 mph traveled about 8.5 miles through Spring Hill in southwest Arkansas.

Its path was intermittent and mostly caused damage to trees and to some structures.



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GEORGE H.W. BUSH 1924-2018



JOHN MOORE/AP

Former President George H.W. Bush holds a camera at arm's length for a selfie with Marines at the airport in Baidoa, Somalia, on Jan. 1, 1993. Bush sent U.S. troops to help starving Somalis during his presidency, and he later teamed up with Bill Clinton to raise money for victims of natural disasters.

A leader guided by concern for humanity

By JAMIE STENGLE

Associated Press

DALLAS — Former President George H.W. Bush teamed up with the man who ousted him from the White House to help victims of natural disasters. He created a program that has honored thousands of American volunteers. He also sent U.S. troops to Africa to help starving Somalis.

It was all part of Bush's vision for creating what he called a "kinder, gentler nation." Here's a look at some of his better-known volunteer and humanitarian work.

■ **Volunteerism.** Bush evoked the vision of a "thousand points of light" during his 1989 inaugural address, inviting the nation to take action through public service, and he established the Daily Point of Light Award the next year. He formally recognized more than 1,000 volunteers during his administration, from Jesse Sanchez Berain, an Idaho man who helped migrant workers and their children, to Doris Tate, who advocated for victims' rights after her daughter, actress Sharon Tate, was killed.

During a White House ceremony Bush attended in 2013 to bestow the 5,000th award, then-President Barack Obama credited Bush with expanding a commitment to service in America. "You love of service has kindled a similar love in the hearts of millions here at home and around the world," Obama said.

■ **Charitable work.** As he accepted his party's nomination for president in 1988, Bush said he was guided by certain traditions: "One is that there is a God and He is good, and His love, while free, has a self-imposed cost: We must be good to one another."

After leaving office, Bush teamed up with former President Bill Clinton, who defeated Bush when he sought a second term in the White House, to raise money for victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. They also worked together on fundraising after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Ike in 2008. In 2017,



BARBARA BUSH, COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF GEORGE BUSH/AP

Bush poses in July 2013 with Patrick (last name withheld at family's request), 2, in Kennebunkport, Maine. Bush and members of his Secret Service detail shaved their heads to show solidarity for Patrick, the son of one of the agents, who was undergoing treatment for leukemia and losing his hair as a result.

Bush and four other living former presidents appeared together at a concert to raise money following hurricanes in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Bush and his wife, Barbara, who died in April, devoted much of their work to promoting cancer research — their daughter Robin died at age 3 of leukemia — and they were life members of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors. A family spokesman said the couple made "substantial" personal gifts to a dozen organizations, including medical centers, but that they didn't want to publicly reveal the amounts.

■ **Helping those with disabilities.** Bush signed the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act,

which bans workplace discrimination of people with disabilities and requires improved access to public places and transportation. The law was a special point of pride for Bush, said Mark Updegrave, who wrote several books on the American presidency.

"He was very proud of the fact that it liberated so many people who we didn't give much thought to — not knowing the obstacles they faced on a daily basis," said Updegrave, president of the Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation.

■ **World affairs.** The Berlin Wall came down as Bush's first year in office came to a close, followed two years later by the Soviet Union's collapse. Bush's steady diplomatic hand helped ensure a peaceful end to the Cold War and he avoided any great "rhetorical flourish" about the U.S. prevailing because he didn't want to compromise the leadership of then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and others, Updegrave said.

"My life has been lived in the shadow of war — I almost lost my life in one. I hate war. I love peace," Bush said in 1988.

■ **Public service.** Bush was a teenager when he began his public service career. The son of a U.S. senator, Bush was one of the Navy's youngest pilots during World War II. He flew 58 missions off the USS San Jacinto and was shot down over the Pacific. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery.

He was elected to Congress in 1966 and served two terms as a Texas congressman. He later served as ambassador to the United Nations and later to China. He was chairman of the Republican National Committee through the worst of the Watergate scandal, and he served as CIA director and vice president before being elected president.

Calling the 41st president's life "a testament that public service is a noble calling," Obama in 2011 awarded Bush the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor for contributions to society.

Bush makes final trip to Washington

Associated Press

HOUSTON — George H.W. Bush embarked on his final journey to Washington as the nation salutes the 41st president for his lifetime of public service that began in the Navy during World War II, ended with four years as president and was characterized throughout by what admirers say was decency, generosity and kindness.

A long motorcade accompanied the hearse carrying Bush's remains from a Houston funeral home to nearby Ellington Airport in Texas for the trip to the nation's capital on an aircraft that often serves as Air Force One.

Before that, students, staff and visitors had been flocking to Bush's presidential library on the campus of Texas A&M University, with thousands of mourners paying their respects at a weekend candlelight vigil at a nearby pond and others contributing to growing flower memorials at Bush statues at both the library and in a park in downtown Houston.

"I think he was one of the kindest, most generous men," said Marge Frezza, who was the downtown statue on Sunday while showing around friends from California.

A similar outpouring is anticipated in Washington this week during the state funeral for Bush, who died late Friday at his home in Houston. He was 94.

Bush, who was president from 1989 to 1993, will lie in state in the U.S. Capitol rotunda for a ceremony and public visitation from

Monday through Wednesday. An invitation-only funeral service is set for Wednesday at Washington National Cathedral. President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump are to attend. Bush's family has not said who will speak at the service. Former President Jimmy Carter also will be there.

Afterward, Bush will be returned to Houston to lie in repose at St. Martin's Episcopal Church before burial Thursday at his family plot on the library grounds. His final resting place will be alongside Barbara Bush, his wife of 73 years who died in April, and Robin Bush, the daughter they lost to leukemia in 1953 at age 3.

Bush's casket was scheduled to arrive in Washington on Monday afternoon aboard the U.S. military airplane. The crew has been tasked by Trump with carrying out "Special Air Mission 41." The number is a reference to Bush's place in the roster of America's presidents.

Former President George W. Bush, the eldest of the four Bush sons, and his wife, Laura, along with brother Neil Bush and his family, accompanied Bush's body to Joint Base Andrews outside Washington, said family spokesman Jim McGrath. Other Bush family members were expected to be at the Maryland military base for the arrival.

Trump has ordered the federal government closed Wednesday for a national day of mourning. Flags on public buildings are flying at half-staff for 30 days out of respect for Bush.



EVAN SISLEY, COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH/AP

Sully, President George H.W. Bush's service dog, lies in front of Bush's casket Sunday in Houston.

Sully honors the late president

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Former President George H.W. Bush's service dog has honored his master with his own tribute in front of the late leader's flag-draped casket.

Bush spokesman Jim McGrath posted a picture Sunday of the yellow Labrador retriever named Sully, with the caption, "Mission complete. #Remembering41."

Bush received Sully in June from the America's VetDogs non-profit organization. The president of the "Partners in Canine Service," and Sully could open doors, pick up items and summon help.

KTRK-TV in Houston reported that Sully will return to America's VetDogs in New York and then join the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Facility Dog Program in Bethesda, Md.

NATION

Comey agrees to appear before House panel

By SPENCER S. HSU
AND FELICIA SONMEZ
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Former FBI Director James Comey will appear voluntarily Friday before the House Judiciary Committee, which has agreed to withdraw a subpoena, says his attorney said Sunday.

In a three-paragraph joint court filing Sunday, Comey's lawyers also withdrew his request to a federal judge to quash the subpoena to testify before the House Judiciary and oversight committees, writing, "Mr. Comey appreciates the Court's attention to the above-captioned matter but has now reached an acceptable accommodation with U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

for voluntary testimony."

Lawyers for the U.S. House of Representatives consented to Comey's move to drop the case.

Comey agreed to sit for a voluntary interview on Friday under terms that include that "so long as the interview proceeds as a voluntary interview, an FBI representative will be present to advise concerning the disclosure of FBI information," said his lawyer, David N. Kelley.

After an initial hearing on the challenge Friday, U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden did not rule but indicated he was unlikely to grant Comey's motion. Both sides were due to return Monday before McFadden.

Comey filed suit to fight a subpoena issued jointly last week by the two committees "not to avoid

giving testimony but to prevent the Joint Committee from using the pretext of a closed interview to peddle a distorted,

'This is the closest I can get to public testimony.'

James Comey
former FBI director

leaks that distorted what witnesses said in closed session before the committees as the reason for the challenge.

During Friday's court session, Thomas G. Hungar, the general

counsel for the House Judiciary Committee, said Comey would be free to speak to reporters after his Hill appearance and to release a transcript, something that is typically available within a day.

In a tweet Sunday, Comey referred to those in-court statements and said that "this is the closest I can get to public testimony."

Kelley had told the court that a closed committee appearance would create "a shadow on the witness but bright lights for the committee member who seeks partisan advantage by peddling a misleading account of the witness' testimony."

But Hungar told the judge that Comey had been subpoenaed for a deposition, not a full committee hearing, and that depositions are always closed, whether in Con-

gress or in civil suits around the country. He said they are typically attended by staff and lawyers and maybe a few members.

The Judiciary and oversight committees jointly subpoenaed Comey and former Attorney General Loretta Lynch more than a week ago to appear in a closed-door deposition to discuss the politically charged FBI investigations into both Russian interference in the 2016 election and the email practices of former Secretary of State Clinton.

Comey said he was willing to testify publicly but not behind closed doors.

He was due to appear Monday on the Hill, but Kelley disclosed in court that a new subpoena changed the deposition date to Tuesday.

3 weeks after fire, kids back in school

By JONATHAN J. COOPER
Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. — Monday marks a return to school for some semblance of routine for thousands of children who lost their homes to a deadly wildfire in Northern California.

Schools in Butte County have been closed since Nov. 8, when the Camp Fire ignited and quickly swept through the towns of Paradise, Concow and Magalia in what would become the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century. At least 88 people were killed and dozens remain unaccounted for.

Officials at the Paradise Unified School District aren't sure how many of their roughly 3,500 students will show up at makeshift schools that will temporarily replace the eight sites lost to the flames.

Some families have left the state. Others are staying with friends or relatives to remove a recurrent California, too far to drive every day.

But nearly all the teachers are returning to provide a familiar and comfortable face to the children who are able to make it to class.

"It's important that the kids are able to stay together and have some sort of normalcy in the crazy devastation that we're having now," said Jodi Seaholm, 40, whose third-grade daughter, Malory, is about to turn 9.

Malory underwent radiation in October to remove a recurrence of brain cancer and showed no fear, Seaholm said, but "this situation with her house burning down has absolutely devastated her."

Two neighboring school districts have allowed children from Paradise to take over available space. Kids who previously went



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

Children who previously went to Paradise Elementary School, above, will go to school in nearby Oroville, Calif.

to Paradise Elementary School will go to school in nearby Oroville, while children from Ponderosa Elementary School will be at a school in Durham.

Paradise High School survived but is inaccessible as the region remains evacuated.

'They're going to need something that they feel like is still a normal part of life.'

Marissa Nypl
mother of student returning to school

at the Chico mall where they can get help from teachers or see their classmates.

But academics will likely be secondary to dealing with trauma and reconnecting with friends, said Paradise High School Principal Loren Lighthall.

"They don't have their church, they don't have their school, they

don't have their work, they don't have their friends, they don't have any of that stuff, and we're asking them to write five-paragraph essays?" Lighthall said. "It's just unreasonable at this point. We're going to do it, but we're going to be superflexible with what we require."

Rescuers have stopped their methodical search for victims in scorched cars and neighborhoods, but they remain on call if people believe they find bone fragments when they're allowed back into evacuation zones.

Marissa Nypl, 47, is living with her family at her husband's co-worker's home in West Sacramento, which is 90 miles from her 10-year-old daughter's temporary school in Durham, until they can move into a rental home much closer. It's too far to drive every day, but Nypl wants to be sure her daughter is there to be with her peers on the first day back for what will likely be an important part of the healing process.

The isolation has been hard for the fifth-grader, a shy girl who was just starting to build a strong group of friends.

"They're going to need something that they feel like is still a normal part of life," Nypl said, noting that just about everything in town is gone.

'El Chapo' trial gives look at lawlessness, excesses

By TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. trial of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in Brooklyn, N.Y., has offered a screenplay-worthy picture of the lawlessness and excesses during his rise to power as Mexico's most infamous drug lord.

Since the trial got underway on Nov. 13, witnesses have described how Guzman used tunnels dug under the border and fake jalapeño cans to smuggle tons of cocaine into the United States during the 1990s and early 2000s.

The Sinaloa cartel, sometimes referred to by insiders as "The Federation," made hundreds of millions of dollars, most of it in U.S. currency collected in such volume it had to be stashed in safe houses while the gang figured out what to do with it. Guzman spent some of it on a private zoo, a diamond-encrusted pistol and paying off police and politicians.

Under all the bravado is a cast of characters who have taken the witness stand ranging from former cartel members to a Colombian drug kingpin with a freakish face that he chose to alter with plastic surgery in a failed attempt to stay under the radar. Among the testimony highlights:

■ **Smuggling by the ton.** The Sinaloa cartel had many crafty ways to smuggle drugs across the border, but perhaps none was craftier than La Comadre brand Pepsi.

Former cartel member Miguel Angel Martinez testified that he helped supervise a warehouse in Mexico City where workers hid cocaine in the cans so it could be trucked over the border. The trucks carried 3,000 cans at a time to Los Angeles, he said. He estimated about 25 to 30 tons of cocaine worth \$400 million to \$500 million got across the border each year.

Proceeds ended up in Tijuana, where Guzman would send his private jets every month to pick it up, Martinez said. On aver-

age, each plane would carry up to \$100 million home.

The cash, he said, helped pay for luxuries like an Acapulco beach house featuring a private zoo and a trip to Switzerland for Guzman to get an exotic "anti-aging" treatment.

■ **Bribery as usual.** A turncoat cartel member named Jesus Zambada told the stand to describe how he kept watch over tons of cocaine stashed in a Mexico City warehouse. But a more important job for him was buying off authorities at a cost of about \$300,000 a month — a price that earned Guzman a police escort after one of his notorious escapes from prison.

Testimony suggested the prisons were on the take too. Martinez claimed when he and Guzman visited a drug boss behind bars, other inmates had put together a lavish meal.

"There was a music group and they had everything, whatever you would want to eat. Whiskey, cocaine," Martinez said. "You could choose between lobster and sirloin and pheasant."

■ **The mask.** The latest star witness for the government has been more notable for his appearance than his testimony.

Former Colombian drug lord Juan Carlos Ramirez Abadia is perhaps best known for his plastic surgery. He told the jury last week that he has had at least three surgeries to change his appearance.

The work altered "my jawbone, my cheekbones, my eyes, my mouth, my ears, my nose," he said.

His testimony made a case for ranking him at the top of the narco pantheon with Guzman. He said he smuggled 400,000 kilos, ordered 150 killings and amassed \$1 billion in assets. Ramirez said he was freed \$1 billion after his arrest in Brazil in 2007.

Ramirez Abadia said he had a cartel business model that included a division entirely devoted to using drug money to bribe authorities to "not do their jobs" to enforce drug laws.

WORLD

Protests carry on; paramedics join

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN
Associated Press

PARIS — French paramedics joined ongoing anti-government protests as the prime minister met with political rivals Monday in a bid to ease anger following violent riots that rocked Paris.

Dozens of ambulances blocked a bridge leading to the National Assembly, and lines of riot police officers stood in the rain to prevent them from getting too close to the building. Paramedics are complaining about changes to working conditions.

It was the latest protest action that President Emmanuel Macron's government has faced in recent weeks. The "yellow vest" movement is bringing together people from across the political spectrum complaining about France's economic inequalities and waning spending power.

Macron, just back from the Group of 20 summit in Argentina, held an emergency meeting Sunday on security and the government hasn't ruled out the possibility of imposing a state of emergency.

On Saturday, more than 130 people were injured and 412 arrested in the French capital amid one of the nation's worst use of riot gear. Police responded with tear gas and water cannons,

closing down dozens of streets and subway stations to contain the riot.

The rioting marked the third straight weekend of clashes in Paris led by protesters wearing distinctive yellow traffic vests. The protests began last month with motorists upset over a fuel tax increase and have grown to encompass a range of complaints that Macron's government doesn't care about the problems of ordinary people. Other protests in France remained peaceful.

By Sunday, some of the most popular tourist streets in Paris were littered with torched cars and broken glass from looted shops and the Arc de Triomphe monument was tagged with graffiti.

During the paramedic protest on Monday, some demonstrators set fire to a small pile of debris and blocked traffic. One activist held up a sign reading "The State killed me," and others chanted "Macron resign."

According to French media reports, students also joined the protest movement by blocking dozens of high schools across France, while clashes between protesters and police officers reignited Monday on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, where demonstrations have been particularly violent in recent weeks.



MICHEL EULÉ/AP

Ambulance workers block the Place de la Concorde and display a board reading "The State killed me" on Monday in Paris.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and Macron have been lambasted for their handling of the crisis. After meeting with the prime minister, Socialist leader Olivier Faure urged Philippe to drop the tax increases and to restore a wealth tax that was slashed by the centrist government.

"We want a change in the method. One needs to come down from Mount Olympus," Faure said, referring to Macron's Greek god

nickname of Jupiter.

Philippe will try to defuse tensions this week before more possible protests this weekend, speaking with yellow vest representatives on Tuesday.

Members of the National Assembly will also hold talks on France's social crisis later this week.

Meanwhile, trade union CGT has called for a day of protest across France on Dec. 14.

Khashoggi friend sues surveillance company

JERUSALEM — A Saudi dissident has filed a lawsuit against an Israeli surveillance company, claiming its sophisticated spyware targeted him and helped lead to the killing of his friend, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The lawsuit says Omar Abdulaziz received and clicked on a link sent to his phone in June 2018 that he argues exposed his mobile communications to Saudi authorities.

Abdulaziz is demanding 600,000 shekels — about \$160,000 — in damages from the company, as well as an order preventing it from selling its technology, known as "Pegasus," to Saudi Arabia.

Court rejects request to be 20 years younger

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Dutch motivational speaker Emile Ratelband may feel like a 49-year-old but according to Dutch law, he is still 69.

A Dutch court on Monday rejected Ratelband's request to shave 20 years off his age in a case that drew worldwide attention.

Ratelband went to court last month, arguing that he didn't feel 69 and saying his request was consistent with other forms of personal transformation which are gaining acceptance in the Netherlands and around the world, such as the ability to change one's name or gender.

Nigerian leader denies rumors of his death

LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigeria's president has taken the extraordinary step of denying rumors that he died and was replaced by a body double, assuring the country that he is alive and well.

Nigerian President Muhammad Buhari, 76, was elected in 2015 and will seek re-election in February. He has been in ill health throughout his presidency.

Rumors of his death started in 2017 when Buhari spent seven weeks in London for medical treatment. They abated when he returned to Nigeria, but increased again last month when opposition leaders and separatists claimed he had been long dead.

Leader jokes of pot usage at meeting

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, whose controversial war on drugs has cost thousands of lives, says he uses marijuana to keep awake at long regional meetings, but later disavowed his assertion as a joke.

Duterte made the comment Monday at an awards ceremony where he was attending. Changing a recent summit meeting in Singapore of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and how the daylong schedules of such gatherings are grueling.

The 73-year-old Duterte said he used marijuana to keep himself awake at the ASEAN meeting. However, he later told reporters he was joking.

Duterte is known for making off-the-cuff remarks.

From The Associated Press

Ukraine calls up reservists amid tensions with Russia

By YURAS KARMANAU
AND VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's president on Monday announced a partial call-up of reservists for training amid tensions with Russia, saying the country needs to beef up its defenses to counter the threat of a Russian invasion.

The Kremlin denied the Ukrainian leader's statement as an "absurd" attempt to inflame tensions.

Relations between the two neighbors have been strained further following a Nov. 25 incident in which two Russian coast guard fired upon and seized three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews off the Crimean Peninsula that Russia annexed from Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko responded by introducing martial law for 30 days in much of Ukraine. For the intrusion of martial law, Ukrainian authorities barred entry to all Russian males aged 16 to 60 in a move the Ukrainian leader said was needed to prevent Russia from further destabilizing the country.

Poroshenko said Monday that some reservists will be summoned for training as part of martial law. He also said that some military units will be redeployed to strengthen the nation's defense.

"Ukraine is taking its own

steps in response to the threat of a large-scale Russian invasion," the Ukrainian leader said.

Over the weekend, Poroshenko said that Russia has deployed a large number of troops along its border with Ukraine and alleged that the Kremlin intends to push inland into Ukraine. Ukraine also accused Russia of blocking its ports on the Sea of Azov.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, dismissed Poroshenko's claims as an "absurd attempt to foment tensions."

"The accusations against Russia have no basis whatsoever," he said.

Peskov also rejected Kiev's claim that Russia was blocking traffic to and from Ukrainian ports on the Sea of Azov, saying that navigation has continued normally except for occasional breaks because of bad weather.

The separatist conflict in eastern regions forming Ukraine's industrial heartland has taken a toll on the national economy, reducing the cargo flow through the Ukrainian ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov. The naval incident further stoked tensions.

Over the weekend, Poroshenko urged Germany and other Western allies to boost their naval presence in the Black Sea to help deter Russia from further aggression.

UN chief: Climate change is "the most important issue we face"

By FRANK JORDANS
AND MONIKA SCISLAWSKA
Associated Press

KATOWICE, Poland — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened the climate summit in Poland by issuing a dramatic appeal to world leaders Monday to take the threat of global warming seriously and to act boldly to avert a catastrophic rise in temperatures before the end of the century.

Guterres called climate change "the most important issue we face."

"Even as we witness devastating climate impacts causing havoc across the world, we are still not doing enough, nor moving fast enough, to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate disruption," Guterres told delegates from almost 200 countries who gathered in Katowice, Poland.

The U.N. chief chided countries, particularly those most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, for failing to do enough to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris climate accord, which set a goal of keeping global warming well below 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit — ideally 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit — by the end of the century.

Citing a recent scientific report on the dire consequences of letting average global temperatures rise beyond 1.5 degrees, Guterres urged countries to cut their emissions 45 percent from 2010 lev-

els by 2030 and aim for net zero emissions by 2050.

Such a move, which experts say is the only way to achieve the 1.5-degree goal, would require a radical overhaul of the global economy and a move away from using fossil fuels.

"In short, we need a complete transformation of our global economy, as well as how we manage land and forest resources," Guterres said.

He said governments should embrace the opportunities rather than cling to fossil fuels such as coal, which is blamed for a significant share of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

The remark was also directed at host Poland, which relies on coal for 80 percent of its energy. But Polish President Andrzej Duda told a later news conference that the coal-rich country will never give up its "strategic fossil fuel."

In order to steer businesses and consumers away from heavily polluting forms of energy, the U.N. chief urged countries to embrace carbon pricing, something few countries have yet to do.

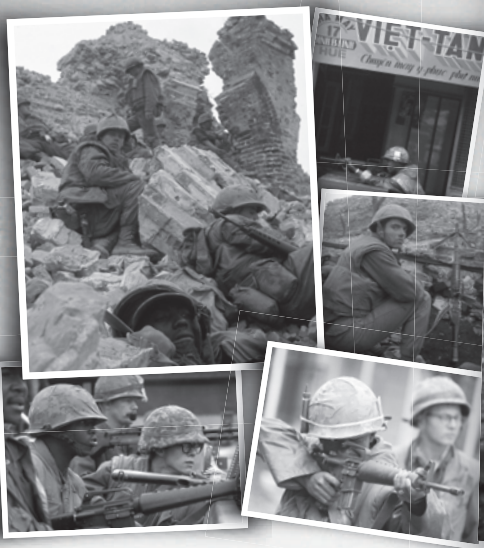
Guterres also urged negotiators not to forget that the challenges they face pale in comparison to the difficulties climate change is already causing millions around the world whose homes and livelihoods are at risk from rising sea levels, drought and more powerful storms.



SPECIAL REPORT

included in the Thursday, Dec. 6,
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WORLD

S. Korea's Moon: Trump's view of Kim 'very friendly'

By HYUNG-JIN KIM
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president said President Donald Trump told him he has a "very friendly view" of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and wants to grant his wishes if he denuclearizes.

North Korea has sought security guarantees from the U.S. and relief from international sanctions.

President Moon Jae-in's office quoted Moon as saying Trump asked him to convey those messages to the North Korean leader if he visits Seoul this year as he promised. Moon spoke to reporters on Saturday aboard his presidential plane en route to New Zealand from Argentina, where he met Trump on the sidelines of the G20 summit.

"President Trump asked me to forward to [Kim] these messages; he has a very friendly view of this country, with 'fire and fury,'" Moon said. "He hopes to fully carry out the remaining agreements (from their June summit in Singapore) together with him so that he will make Chairman Kim Jong Un get what he wants."

After deriding Kim last year as a "little rocket man" and threatening this country with "fire and fury," Trump has bestowed praise on Kim. In September, Trump called Kim "very open" and "terrific" and said he and Kim "fell in love."

Moon said he and Trump agreed during their meeting that Kim's trip to Seoul would play a "very positive role" in U.S.-North

Korea nuclear diplomacy. Moon said it's still unclear whether Kim will visit Seoul by the end of this year and that it's up to the North Korean leader.

Moon, who has facilitated a series of high-level talks between the United States and North Korea, including the Trump-Kim summit, has met Kim three times this year.

After their third meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, in September, Moon said Kim agreed to make a reciprocal visit to Seoul this year. Their two previous summits were held in the countries' shared border village of Panmunjom.

If Kim, a third-generation hereditary ruler, visits Seoul, he would be the first North Korean leader to do so since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. Moon said a visit would convey Kim's commitment to nuclear disarmament, better inter-Korean relations and world peace.

After sharply raising tensions with nuclear and missile tests last year, Kim abruptly reached out to Moon and Trump with a vague nuclear disarmament pledge.

Subsequent nuclear diplomacy hasn't made headway since the U.S.-North Korea summit in June. But both Moon and Trump say fears of war from the Korean Peninsula have eased sharply.

Trump said on Air Force One while returning to Washington from Argentina that his next meeting with Kim would likely happen in January or February. He said there were three sites under consideration but declined to name them.



Hwang Kwang-mo, Yonhap/AP

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, left, shakes hands with President Donald Trump on Friday during a meeting on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Former UN chief urges North to take concrete steps toward denuclearizing

Associated Press

TOKYO — Former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Monday to take concrete steps toward complete denuclearization and gain the trust of the international community if he wants sanctions lifted.

Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister, said "this is the time" to achieve North Korea's denuclearization after nearly a quarter-century of unsuccessful efforts, and that the North and the world should not lose this opportunity.

"I'd like to really advise the North Korean leader that the world is ready" to help his country, Ban told The Associated Press, specifically citing South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan

and Russia. He said denuclearization is important for a better future for the two Koreas, including reconciliation and reunification.

"I hope this is the time — please do not lose this opportunity," he said.

North Korea is seeking security guarantees from the U.S. and relief from international sanctions.

President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in say tensions have eased significantly since then, but Ban, who is in Tokyo for an event organized by a business group, said the crisis is not over and that North Korea should fully disclose its nuclear weapons inventory to a trusted international organization such

as the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The crisis is still continuing because of North Korea's development of nuclear, missile and weapons program and materials," Ban said. "It is North Korea which should clearly state and show by taking actions, then I am sure that there will be no reason why the Security Council of the United Nations will continue to impose the sanction on North Korea."

Trump recently said he is likely to hold a second summit with Kim in January or February. Ban said he hopes the summit will occur at a time when the international community feels confident about North Korea's commitment to denuclearization.

Qatar plans to pull out of OPEC amid tension with Saudi Arabia

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The tiny, energy-rich Arab nation of Qatar announced on Monday it will withdraw from OPEC in January, mixing its aspirations to increase production outside of the cartel's constraints with the politics of slighting the Saudi-dominated group amid the kingdom's ban of Doha.

The surprise announcement from Qatar's minister of state for energy affairs, Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, again throws into question the role of the cartel after needing nonmembers to push through a production cut in 2016 after prices crashed below \$30 a barrel. It also marks the first time a Mideast nation has left the cartel

since its founding in 1960.

In a statement, al-Kaabi said Qatar, the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, planned to increase its exports from 77 million tons of gas per year to 110 million tons. He also said Qatar wants to raise its oil production.

"In light of such efforts and plans, and in our pursuit to strengthen Qatar's position as a reliable and trustworthy energy supplier across the globe, we had to take steps to review Qatar's role and contributions on the international energy scene," al-Kaabi said in a statement.

There was no immediate comment from Vienna-based OPEC, which is to meet this month and discuss possible production cuts. In November, Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said OPEC

and allied oil-producing countries will likely need to cut crude supplies, perhaps by as much as 1 million barrels of oil a day, to rebalance the market.

Qatar produces only some 600,000 barrels of crude oil a day, making it OPEC's 11th-biggest producer. The loss of production, under 2 percent of overall OPEC supply a day, won't greatly affect the cartel's position in the market. Anas Alhajji, an oil analyst, said Qatar's decision "has no impact on the market either way, whether they're in or they're out."

"The cost for them is higher than the benefit" of remaining in OPEC, Alhajji said. "This is just like shutting down a losing business."

Qatar, a country of 2.6 million people where citizens make up

over 10 percent of the population, discovered its offshore North Field gas deposit in 1971, the same year it became independent.

It took years for engineers to discover the field's vast reserves, which shot Qatar to No. 3 in world rankings behind Russia and Iran, with which it shares the North Field. It's also made the country fantastically wealthy, sparking its successful bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Qatar's wealth also has given it greater significance in international politics. Its political stances, often supporting Islamists, have drawn the ire of its neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, OPEC's largest exporter.

In June 2017, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates cut ties to Qatar in a

political dispute that continues to this day. They also launched an economic boycott, stopping Qatar Airways flights from using their airspace, closing off the small country's sole land border with Saudi Arabia and blocking its ships from using their ports.

They say the crisis stems from Qatar's support for extremist groups in the region, charges denied by Doha. The four nations also have pointed to Qatar's close relationship with Iran, with which it shares its massive offshore gas field. Qatar restored full diplomatic ties to Iran amid the dispute.

OPEC was formed in 1960 as a reaction to Western domination of the oil industry, and Qatar joined the cartel in 1961.

Qatar is a nation about the size of the state of Connecticut.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Venture capitalists getting inside look at gig economy

BY SARAH MCBRIDE
Bloomberg

Venture capitalist Jamison Hill was momentarily flummoxed by a strappy red garment. Hill, who is accustomed to working behind a desk in a San Francisco high rise, had pulled it out of a bag of strangers' laundry that he was tasked with sorting, but with strips of fabric in unexpected places, it was surprising categorization.

"So what is it?" asked his trainer, James Joun, the co-founder of laundry startup Rinse Inc.

"This is," Hill's voice trailed off as he examined it from different angles. "This is a blouse," Joun said, as Hill finally turned it in a way that showed it was indeed a woman's wrap-around shirt.

Hill is a senior principal at Bain Capital Ventures, and by working a temporary laundry job he joins the ranks of a significant number of investors embedding themselves in the gig economy. As startups that rely on contract staffers reach ever higher valuations, VCs and bankers alike are trying their hand at the workers' side of companies' apps — running errands, shuttling cargo, and the like.

The benefits of afternoons spent sorting other people's laundry, say analysts of the strategy, can mean the difference between cinching the deal and losing it, or understanding the way the business works and getting it wrong.

The idea isn't new. Sequoia Capital's Michael Moritz packed up groceries after the venture firm backed online-shopping service Instacart back in 2013, a Sequoia

spokeswoman said. The chief executive officer of Ikea's TaskRabbit, Stacy Brown-Philpot, cleaned a customer's apartment.

And Michael Grimes, who heads up global technology investment banking at Morgan Stanley, has driven an Uber occasionally for years in hope of one day underwriting the ride-hailing giant's initial public offering.

But the concept is rising in popularity among venture capitalists in particular, as funding flooding the valley has made it imperative for VCs to prove to founders that they really get the business. Money, advice and introductions are no longer enough of a differentiator for founders.

In the first three quarters of this year, venture investors poured \$86 billion into startups, more than at any other point since the dot-com era, according to PitchBook.

What startups want now, VCs say, is a dedicated and down-to-earth partner. Hill signed up for his work sorting laundry through staffing service Wonolo Inc., earning \$18.10 an hour and a five-star rating for his troubles.

Wonolo Chief Operating Officer AJ Brustein, who himself works a shift once a quarter, said he appreciated the VC's additional legwork. "It seems like he really hustles," Brustein said.

Earlier this month, Hill and Bain Capital led a \$32 million round in Wonolo, which stands for "Work Now, Locally." Hill worked his shift at Wonolo client Rinse after inking the funding deal, but completing a stint as a Wonolo

staffer was important enough to him that he wrote it into the investment agreement.

Hill wasn't even the only would-be investor who signed up to work on the service. In a previous funding round, Brustein and his co-founder rejected an offer from another VC who undertook a similar stunt.

Wonolo's decision to go with the differentiator was not, they said, the result of any shortcomings on the job.

"I think that less than 50 percent of VCs actually understand the business they're in," said Naabeel Hyatt, a venture capitalist at Spark Capital who signed up to do a stint for Postmates Inc., the service that delivers food and other items to customers.

Customers' reliance on the deliveries made Hyatt realize that "there are people who are just going to start using it as a utility," he said, rather than just ordering on a one-off basis. "It made the market feel much larger to me."

Hyatt decided he was in, leading a \$16 million funding round for Postmates in 2014.

SoftBank's \$100 billion Vision Fund has also sent out emissaries to gig economy companies. Vision Fund managing partner Jeff Housenbold assigned a team member to sign up as a DoorDash Inc. delivery person and another as a Wag Labs Inc. dog walker.

Housenbold, who worked his way through college with his own part-time jobs, cautioned VCs not to make too much of their short time in the trenches.

"I'd never say, 'Don't do it,'"



DAVID PAUL MORRIS/Bloomberg

Jamison Hill works a shift at Rinse in San Francisco.

he said. "But I'd say, 'Don't do it pouncing your chest, saying 'Look at me.'"

Most VCs are well aware that their brief brushes with hourly wage work could prompt eye rolls or worse. Economic inequality in the San Francisco Bay area is the third-highest in the country, according to the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank. And the average compensation for a VC is \$634,000, according to J. Thelander Consulting.

Typically, when investors work at warehouses and the like, they keep their heads down rather than advertise that they're there for reconnaissance.

"Unless you come out and say, 'I'm a VC, I'm driving up in my Mercedes,'" Brustein said, "unless you have that kind of attitude, there's no reason why anyone would know you're there."

None of the investors interviewed for this article said they talked with the other workers about workers' rights or access to health care.

Gig economy work is infamous for its instability and lack of health insurance. But several VCs did tout the flexibility of temporary jobs.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 4)	\$1.1628
Dollar buys (Dec. 4)	69.86
British pound (Dec. 4)	\$1.31
Japanese yen (Dec. 4)	111.60
South Korean won (Dec. 4)	1,088.09
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound	\$1.2722
Canada (Dollar)	1.3180
China (Yuan)	6.8837
Denmark (Krone)	6.5783
Egypt (Pound)	17.9197
Euro	\$1.1341/0.8817
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8159
Hungary (Forint)	284.62
Israel (Shekel)	3.7220
Japan (Yen)	113.48
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3042
Norway (Krone)	8.5504
Philippines (Peso)	52.44
Poland (Zloty)	3.77
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7536
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3671
South Korea (Won)	1,111.77
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9979
Thailand (Baht)	32.75
Turkey (Lira)	0.279

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, or nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federals funds market rate	2.00
3-month bill	2.31
30-year bond	3.30

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Flaming hole found to be intentionally set

AR MIDWAY — A fire that caused a mysterious burning hole in Arkansas in September was intentionally set, authorities say, and not the result of a meteorite or methane.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that Baxter County authorities used soil samples to identify various flammable chemicals typically found in paint thinners where a 12-foot-tall fire spurted from a hole in the ground and burned for around 40 minutes.

Authorities said it may have been a prank.

"That seems like the most plausible thing to me, that somebody dumped a quart of paint thinner down there and caught it on fire," said Wesley Stites, chemistry and biochemistry department chair at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Couple who lost ring in NYC getting it back

NY NEW YORK — The New York Police Department said an English couple who lost an engagement ring down a Times Square utility grate will be getting it back.

The man and woman had been in Times Square late Friday night, and police said the man dropped the ring during the proposal to his girlfriend.

They asked for help, but police were initially unsuccessful at getting the ring out, and the man and woman left without leaving their names or contact information.

The NYPD posted on social media. Police said the couple, who had returned to England, got in touch and the ring will get back to them.

Players suspended for naked 'Oreo Run'

IL BYRON — Ten football players at a Northern Illinois high school were suspended from the team for three games last month after they ran across a field naked with Oreo cookies wedged between their buttocks.

The Rockford Register Star reported that the Byron High School players were suspended for indecent exposure but that school administrators concluded they went on the "Oreo Run" at the school's football field voluntarily and were not victims of hazing.

The paper reported the story after obtaining a letter sent to parents of students who admitted to participating in the run in October.

Radio station nixes 'Baby, It's Cold Outside'

OH CLEVELAND — A Cleveland radio station said it has stopped playing "Baby, It's Cold Outside" after listeners said the song heard on countless holiday playlists is inappropriate.

They're not the first to question the song's undertones and criticize the duet, in which the singer tries to persuade the other to stay and their exchanges include lyr-



ANDREE KEHN, (LEWISTON, MAINE) SUN JOURNAL/AP

Leading the way

Rod Cohen leads the pack of reindeer pulling the SorthStar ambulance and Mrs. Claus during the Chester Greenwood parade in Farmington, Maine, on Saturday.

ics such as "What's in this drink?" and "Baby, don't hold out."

WDOK-FM midday host Glenn Anderson said he recognizes that society was different when the song was written in 1944, but he doesn't think it has a place today, especially in the era of the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment.

Black ice causes 30-car pileup during rush hour

IN CARMEL — Authorities said black ice appears to have caused a rush-hour pileup in suburban Indianapolis that collected 30 vehicles.

Fishers Fire Department Capt.

John Mehling said the pileup occurred shortly before 7 a.m. Thursday on the 96th Street bridge over the White River in Carmel.

Mehling said four patients were transported to hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries. He said 17 vehicles were towed away by seven different towing agencies.

Woman rescued 3 days after car got stuck

IA FAIRFIELD — A Canadian woman was found by snowmobilers after she spent three days stuck with her car on a muddy rural road in southeast

Iowa.

Terry Harnish, 72, of Hubbards, Nova Scotia, was visiting friends on Thanksgiving when she took a wrong turn onto a dirt road outside Fairfield. Her car became mired in mud up to its wheel wells, and she was unable to walk to one of the farmhouses she'd passed.

The Des Moines Register reported that she spent the next three days in her car, surviving on a tea drink and marzipan cake.

A heavy snow brought out two teenage snowmobilers whose attention she attracted with her car lights and horn. Their father used a tractor to take Harnish back into Fairfield.

THE CENSUS



\$3K

The approximate amount of money that elementary school students in Minot, N.D., raised to outfit a K-9 officer with the city police department. The money raised by the students at Longfellow Elementary was enough to buy a uniform vest and collar for the German shepherd named Mace, as well as a bulletproof vest.

Teen freed after being stuck in vault at bank

FL HOLLYWOOD — Officials said a teen was freed after spending more than three hours in the vault of an abandoned Florida bank.

News outlets reported that Hollywood firefighters tried to drill through a wall to break into the vault after the 17-year-old's friend called 911.

Rescuers were stymied until a worker at the bank's new branch across the street heard of the predicament. That worker remembered the code and was able to open the vault's massive door.

Man fined for importing endangered leopards

KS KANSAS CITY — A Kansas man will pay a \$5,000 fine for unlawfully importing endangered leopard cats.

U.S. Attorney Stephen McAlister announced that Lawrence Payne, 34, of Olathe, was fined after pleading guilty to one count of violating the Endangered Species Act.

The investigation began when Payne applied to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a breeding license for Asian leopard cats.

Chick-fil-A fans brave snow for free food

NY CREEKTOWAGA — Dozens of hardy souls braved hours of snow and wind for a year's worth of free Chick-fil-A as the fast food chain opened its first Buffalo-area store.

As part of grand opening festivities, Chick-fil-A promised 52 chicken sandwiches to the first 100 guests in line, prompting some to pitch tents in the parking lot with plans to spend the night despite snow and frigid temperatures.

But with snow piling up, Chick-fil-A announced it would award the winners 12 hours ahead of schedule — at 6 p.m. Wednesday, instead of 6 a.m. Thursday.

From wire reports

FACES

'Hamilton' honored alongside artists

Broadway musical joins individuals receiving recognition at annual Kennedy Center event

By PETER MARKS
The Washington Post

The Kennedy Center Honors stepped out of its comfort zone Sunday night, conferring recognition for the first time on a living, breathing work of art, along with four seasoned American artists. And the change felt both fresh and a little fraught.

By adding a popular musical, the universally celebrated "Hamilton," to a historic list of honorees that has run alphabetically over the past 41 years from George Abbott to Joanne Woodward, the Kennedy Center radically revised the rules and, in a way, the lavish ceremony that fetes the winners. The other winners this year were singer and actress Cher, country music star Reba McEntire, jazz great Wayne Shorter and avant-garde composer Philip Glass.

The addition infused the show with the music and star power of a dazzling Broadway blockbuster and a quartet of artists at the pinnacle of their careers. It is likely that in doling out special honors to "Hamilton" composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, director Thomas Kalish, music director Alex Lacamoire and costar Andy Blankenbuehler, the arts center is making a direct appeal to a younger audience for the

relevance of the awards.

It remains to be seen, of course, whether this year was a breakthrough or an opportunistic exception. In the meantime, the production itself, divided as always into five distinct segments, unfolded as a kind of superstore of acts, mostly musical but some spoken or comic. Gloria Estefan, a 2017 honoree, served as master of ceremonies for a cast that included such luminaries as Renee Fleming, Cyndi Lauper, Herbie Hancock, Kristin Chenoweth, S. Epatha Merkerson, Amanda Seyfried, Adam Lambert, Kelly Clarkson, Jennifer Koh, Esperanza Spalding and St. Vincent.

It's incredibly hard to boil down the lifetimes of the honorees to 25 minutes of material, to do justice to a life devoted, for instance, to finding "so many ways to make his horn sound like the human voice," as Wynton Marsalis commented in a short film shown about Shorter, the jazz composer. And in some cases, the praise was so syrupy, it could have stuck to your shoes. "Reba, on behalf of Earth and the universe and from worlds beyond, thank you so much for sharing those gifts with us," gushed the comic actress Melissa Paterman, a co-star of McEntire's on the WB



GREG ALLEN, INVISION/AP

The 2018 Kennedy Center honorees, front row from left: Wayne Shorter, Cher, Reba McEntire and Philip Glass; and back row from left, the co-creators of "Hamilton," Thomas Kalish, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Andy Blankenbuehler and Alex Lacamoire.

sitcom "Reba."

Whoopi Goldberg, in introducing the night's final segment, extolling Cher, did Paterman one better. "Elvis. Sinatra. Cher," she declared, grandly.

The evening was fueled by exceptional musical performances. Clarkson, McEntire's daughter-in-law, belted out a divine version of McEntire's "Fancy," and Jackson delivered a rafter-raising rendition of the "Hamilton" George Washington's "One Last Time" that evolved into a buoyant ensemble number with the local members of the Voices of America Youth Choir. The participation of Miranda and Lacamoire, on piano, represented the first time that honorees have performed at their own celebration.

Lambert, turning up for the Cher trib-

ute, made an event high point of Cher's 1998 hit "Believe," and Lauper got the audience on its feet to bop along with "If I Could Turn Back Time." From the Opera House box that the honorees shared with various other attending celebrities, a glowing Cher tearfully took in the moment. (As was expected, President Donald Trump was a no-show again this year.)

The show mentioned current events only once, and that was an homage to another American of estimable achievement, the 41st president, George H.W. Bush, who died Nov. 30. Estefan was emotional as she told a story about receiving a consoling call from Bush after her near-fatal bus accident. The sustained ovation that followed was one of the longest in an evening full of them.

'Ralph Breaks the Internet' dominates box office for second week

From wire reports

On a typically sleepy post-Thanksgiving weekend in movie theaters, leftovers led the box office and Disney's "Ralph Breaks the Internet" repeated as No. 1 with \$25.8 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The "Wreck-It Ralph" sequel dropped steeply (54 percent) after nearly setting a Thanksgiving record last weekend. But with only one new film in wide release, nothing came close to "Ralph Breaks the Internet," which sends John C. Reilly and Sarah Silverman's video-game characters into cyberspace. In 11 days of release, the \$175 million film has cleared \$207 million worldwide.

Still going strong in its fourth week of release, Universal's "The Grinch" came in second with \$17.7 million in ticket sales. "The Grinch," with Benedict Cumberbatch as the Christmas curmudgeon, surpassed \$200 million domestically and edged in front of last week's No. 2 film, the "Rocky" sequel "Creed II."

The boxing drama, with Michael B. Jordan as Adonis Creed, took in \$16.8 million in its second weekend. It has grossed \$81.2 million on a \$50 million budget.

The week's lone new wide release, the horror film "The Possession of Hannah Grace," opened modestly with \$6.5 million.

Queen, Adam Lambert to tour North America

Queen and Adam Lambert are launching a six-week North American tour following the release of the Freddie Mercury biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody."

Live Nation announced the 23-date tour Monday. It will feature original band members Brian May and Roger Taylor with Adam Lambert singing lead. It will kick off in Vancouver, British Columbia, on July 10. Tickets will go on sale on Dec. 7.

The tour follows the group's September run in Las Vegas.

Neil deGrasse Tyson denies allegations

Renowned astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson says he will cooperate fully with an "impartial investigation" into allegations of sexual misconduct that have been leveled against him.

Pathos.com recently published accounts from two women who said that Tyson behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner toward them. Tyson was host of "Cosmos: Possible Worlds" on Fox in 2014 and a new edition of the series was to air on National Geographic next year.

In a Facebook post Dec. 1, Tyson denied the accusation that he groped a woman and he denied



POWERS IMAGERY, INVISION/AP

From left: Brian May, Adam Lambert and Roger Taylor of Queen + Adam Lambert pose in Las Vegas in August. Queen and Adam Lambert are launching a six-week North American tour starting July 10.

that he made sexual advances toward a production assistant. He apologized for making the production assistant feel uncomfortable. Fox and National Geographic Networks have said they will conduct a thorough investigation.

Kid Rock booted from parade after remarks

Kid Rock's profane comments on live TV have gotten him booted from leading the Nashville Christmas Parade. Instead, parade organizers

have invited James Shaw Jr., the man hailed as a community hero for wrestling a gun away from the shooter during a Nashville Waffle House shooting in April that killed four people and injured four others.

On Nov. 30, Kid Rock used an expletive to describe Joy Behar during an interview on "Fox & Friends." He did the interview from his bar in Nashville.

"God forbid you say something a little wrong; you're racist, homophobic, Islamophobic, this that and the other. People need to calm down, get a little less politically correct," Kid Rock said. "And I would say, you know, love everybody. Except, I'd say screw that Joy Behar (expletive)."

Multiple "Fox & Friends" personalities apologized on air afterward. Kid Rock apologized for the language, but "not the sentiment."

Other news

A memoir by the late civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is being reissued, and a film version is in the works. Algonquin Books announced Monday that a 10th-anniversary edition of Roundtree's "Mighty Justice" is coming out next November.

The nominations for the 2019 Grammy Awards, originally planned for Wednesday, will now

be announced Friday because of former President George H.W. Bush's funeral and public viewing this week.

The typewriter Hugh Hefner used in college was the top-selling item at an auction Nov. 30. Dec. 1 of the Playboy magazine founder's possessions. Julien's Auctions says the Underwood Standard portable typewriter sold for \$162,500. His complete set of Playboy magazines sold for \$76,800, and a gold ring with a hidden compartment containing a Viagra pill sold for \$22,400.

The wife and daughter of Vice President Mike Pence plan two more picture books about the family bunny, Marlon Bundo.

Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra posted photos of their wedding celebration Dec. 1 amid reports that the couple had wed after a four-month courtship. It is the first marriage for Chopra, 36, and Jonas, 26.

Quentin Tarantino married Israeli singer and model Daniella Pick in a small ceremony in Los Angeles on Nov. 28. It's the first marriage for the 55-year-old "Pulp Fiction" director. The 35-year-old Pick is the daughter of Israeli pop singer and composer Svika Pick.

Ken Berry, an actor and dancer who played the affable and clumsy Capt. Wilton Parmenter in the 1960s sitcom "P. Troop," died Dec. 1. He was 85.

SHIFTING GEARS



2020 Lincoln Aviator

PHOTOS BY LINCOLN MOTOR CO./TNS

Lots to like about the 2020 Lincoln Aviator

By MARK PHELAN
Detroit Free Press

The all-new 2020 Lincoln Aviator midsize luxury SUV will feature an electric-only driving mode and the most power of any vehicle in the brand's history when it goes on sale in summer 2019.

The sleek, three-row SUV is vital to Lincoln's plan to return to relevance in the U.S. and Chinese markets. It rides on a brand new architecture and will be built alongside the next-generation Ford Explorer in Chicago. Lincoln will unveil the Aviator at the Los Angeles auto show Wednesday.

The interior features Lincoln signatures: modern design and handsome materials, particularly on the top-of-the-line Black Label model.

Premium looks, premium tech "Lincoln is at a takeoff point," brand chief Joy Falotico said.

The Aviator's appearance echoes that sentiment. The side view is reminiscent of the tapered profile of an airplane wing. The roofline slopes down from windshield to tailgate while its rockers — the panels below the bottom of the doors — rise from front to rear wheels.

The SUV is loaded with technology to challenge the comfort, capability and performance of established luxury three-row SUVs like the Audi Q7 and Volvo XC90.

Lincoln hasn't revealed prices, but the Aviator will cost less than the brand's bigger Navigator flagship SUV.

Expect a base rear-wheel-drive model, with prices possibly starting around \$50,000. A loaded all-wheel-drive Aviator with the 450-hp plug-in hybrid system could edge into the low \$80,000s, the bot-



The center console of the 2020 Lincoln Aviator is pictured. The Aviator features an electric-only driving mode.

tom of the Navigator price range.

What customers will like

- **Interior wow factor.** Lincoln's popular Black Label trim level will feature materials including leather upholstery that looks like vintage luggage, seat perforations that resemble Lincoln's star badge and open-pore wood trim with a horizontal grain to emphasize the feeling of interior space. Four-zone climate control allows different settings for all three rows of seats.
- **Concert hall sound.** An even more

advanced version of Lincoln's Revel audio features four speakers in the headliner above the front and middle row of seats. Combined with digital processing, the result is a three-dimensional sound projection. Called Revel Ultima 3D, that system has 28 speakers.

- Lincoln also one-ups itself with luxurious seats that include new massage and lumbar features.

- **Performance.** The new architecture should deliver responsive handling, a comfortable ride and good towing capacity. The architecture is called CD6.

- **Comfort.** Air Glide, an adjustable air suspension that responds to road conditions and driving style, will be available. In addition to adapting to soften bumps in the road, the system will lower the Aviator for easy entry and exit and to improve aerodynamics at highway speed.

- **Power and efficiency.** The plug-in hybrid, called the Aviator Grand Touring, features a lithium-ion battery under the second-row seat. It will allow a hybrid mode and all-electric driving — at least 30 miles in electric mode seems a reasonable expectation — and generate 450-horsepower-plus and more than 600 pound-feet of torque, making it the most powerful vehicle in Lincoln's history.

- The base drivetrain is Lincoln's familiar 400-hp twin-turbo 3.0-liter V6 linked to a 10-speed automatic transmission. The Grand Touring plug-in hybrid teams the V6 with an electric motor built into the transmission.

- An app allows the owner to use a smartphone as a key to unlock and start the Aviator, even to actuate the remote start from long distance — like when you're in the shuttle from the airport to a vehicle that's been parked in subzero temperatures. The app can also remember each user's preferred settings for seat, mirrors, audio and climate settings.

- Adaptive cruise control with traffic-sign recognition that can change the programmed speed to match the legal limit.

- **Hands-free automated parking.** The Aviator will steer, brake and shift gears as needed to tuck itself into a parallel or perpendicular parking space. All the driver has to do is keep a finger on the automatic parking button.

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OPINION

George H.W. Bush elevated prudence

By DAVID VON DREHLE
The Washington Post

As a star of "Saturday Night Live" during the misunderstood presidency of George H.W. Bush, Dana Carvey had people across the country repeating, as a laugh line: "Not gonna do it. Wouldn't be prudent." Carvey's Bush impersonation captured the distinctive syntax of a patrician Yankee who was taught by his formidable mother that speaking in the first person was bad form.

But what made the phrase so distinctively Bushian was "prudent," an antique word that not only signaled his blue blood (as in, "Dink and Muffy agree that it's prudent to reshingle the summer cottage") but also summed up the president in two syllables.

Bush, who died Friday at 94 — the longest-lived president in U.S. history — wasn't known for excitement or inspiration. His prudence, however, was no joke. Judged by Aristotle and Aquinas to be among the highest virtues, prudence is the disciplined use of wise and careful foresight. In modern usage, it is often confused with over-caution, even cowardice. But true prudence is not afraid of risk; it respects risk and calculates it.

We tend to forget how dangerous the world was when Bush became president in 1989 after eight years as Ronald Reagan's understudy. In Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev promised openness and reform, but exactly what that meant for the shape of the world was unclear. The changes came fast and furiously. Within less than a year, the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan; Chinese soldiers massacred protesters in Tiananmen Square; communist governments fell in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania; and the Berlin Wall came down.

Taken individually, each of these events was welcome news for the United States and its allies; even the bloodshed in China, horrific as it was, bespoke a rising generation with dreams of freedom. Taken together, they threatened to unbalance the world order.

Bush's delicate task was to allow the Soviet Union to unwind with a measure of dignity while carefully expanding the Western umbrella. He needed to measure his steps and see around corners. Bush understood how nervous Europeans would be about German unification, for example, and carefully assured the Poles, the French, the Russians and others that the United States, through NATO, could prevent another rise of militaristic nationalism in the new Germany.

This was unmarked territory. When was the map ever remade and power restructured without the sledgehammer of violence? Bush's prudent diplomacy led some to accuse him of being too timid, to mistake caution for weakness. ("This is no time to go wobbly!" British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher claimed to have scolded him at one point.) They forgot this was a man who, at 18, found it prudent to lead a bomber crew into combat as one of the youngest U.S. Navy aviators of World War II.

In the summer of 1990, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein pressed this error too far, gambling that he could steal neighboring Kuwait and Bush wouldn't stop him. Over the next seven months, Bush orchestrated a masterpiece of prudent leadership, drawing on the résumé that made him perhaps the best-prepared president ever. The former congressman handled the politics of building a bipartisan consensus in Washington. The former U.N. ambassador patiently walked the United Nations through one resolution after another, tightening the

screws on Saddam. The former director of the CIA foresaw the intrigues of Middle Eastern politics and caught Saddam's attempts to exploit them. The former envoy to China won Beijing's passive approval of "all necessary means" to liberate Kuwait.

The global coalition that ultimately joined Operation Desert Storm, stretching from Niger to New Zealand, Poland to Pakistan, was a sign of widespread confidence in Bush's ability to wield American hegemony with care. And his decision to halt the operation with Saddam still in power vindicated that confidence. For unlike his son and his son's reckless counselors — Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney most egregiously — the senior President Bush understood that prudence advised against toppling the dictator without a good idea of what could take his place.

Two years plus six weeks after George H.W. Bush took office, the world was a different place than he found it, and he had earned the reputation of a man who could work. It's shocking, really, to look back on 1992 and see how little this achievement counted with voters. Having won some 49 million votes in his 1988 landslide, Bush was sent home after a single term with barely 39 million in his column.

Creation of a new world is something more exciting. Hoo boy, have we gotten it: Oval Office sexcapades, an impeachment, the heedless invasion of Iraq followed some eight years later by the heedless withdrawal of U.S. troops, an economic crash — all leading up to the wild improvisations of a creation apocalyptic. There are no do-overs in history. But I believe if we'd known then what we know now, we would have said: Not gonna do it.

Wouldn't be prudent.

David Von Drehle is a Washington Post columnist. He is the author of "Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America's Most Perilous Year."

Lessons from the limping Trump, Macron revolutions

By MEGAN MCARDLE
The Washington Post

If he had run in any other year, he probably never would have become president. Limited political experience, no real connection to a mainstream party and a résumé that screams "out-of-touch rich guy." The majority of the electorate clearly had someone else as their first choice. But thanks to a series of historical accidents — notably, a late-breaking scandal that fatally damaged his opponent's chances — Trump, the 45th president, now holds the highest office in the land.

Given this unlikely path to office, it's hardly surprising that his approval ratings are dimly low. Or that he faces a swelling protest movement that occasionally turns violent. The country was voting against his opponent more than it was voting for him, and now that he's exercising the powers they reluctantly handed him, they're none too pleased.

I speak, of course, of Emmanuel Macron, the president of France. But you can be excused if you thought I was referring to President Donald Trump. That the two men can appear so politically similar despite such wildly different philosophical commitments suggests a Western polity that's groping for a workable theory of government — and failing to find it.

To be sure, you have to squint a bit to see the fundamental similarity between the two presidents. It's fair to say that the educated center-left professional class that provides Macron's most enthusiastic support is, in the United States, among Trump's bitterest opponents. And Macron, whose background includes turns as a high-level bureaucrat and an investment

banker, is exactly the type against whom Trump voters rebelled.

Trump and Macron, in other words, are nearly pure embodiments of the opposing currents that are reshaping politics throughout Western democracies: the rise of a consolidated cosmopolitan class that often has more in common with counterparts in other nations than with less educated countrymen, and the populist backlash that the rise has engendered.

Both enjoy power not because voters actually endorsed their purist visions, but because of scandal and the somewhat arcane structure of the elections they won. Trump sealed an Electoral College victory without winning the popular vote. But Macron, because of 11th-hour questions about candidate Hillary Clinton's private email server, Macron walked to easy victory in a runoff election largely because a corruption allegation during the first round of voting dented the center-right candidate just enough to let nationalism's Emmanuel Macron become the 18th-hour victor.

But some supporters nonetheless saw in these victories the sign that the time of the technocrats or the populists had finally arrived. And detractors will be equally tempted to see in the current struggles a sign that the final victory will be theirs. Those opponents should pause to look again at the French.

French populists, for example, may be heartened by the widespread and vehement protests that erupted over fuel price increases caused by Macron's new carbon tax, forcing him into an embarrassing reconsideration. But these populists should study Trump carefully to see how great the distance between rallying crowds and successfully governing.

Trump is strongest when articulating emotive goals, such as his promises to "Make America Great Again" by stopping foreigners from stealing all the good jobs. But his populist disdain for pointy-headed elites, which includes the administrative class needed to implement his proposals, has left him largely unable to put policy flesh on the rhetorical bones. And his fiery rhetoric has also inflamed his opposition, who voted to give control of the House of Representatives to the other party.

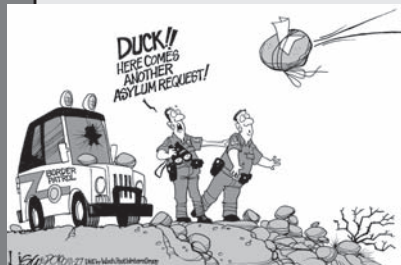
However, those tempted to imagine that the cure for Trumpism is a bloodless "good government" platform, driven by the efficiency ethos and priorities of the professional classes, should be humbled by Macron's struggles. Technocracy has no constituency outside those classes on either side of the Atlantic. Unless technocracy can ally itself with less abstract kinds of politics — the grubby special interests, the appeals to less rational and more visceral moral ties — it founders in a rising tide of voter hostility.

For the past two years, in Western democracies the old competition between the left and right has been realigning into a new battle between cosmopolitans and nationalists, declining ethnic majorities and growing immigrant classes, educated elites and the salt of the earth. Both sides have experienced embittering defeats but also heady elation at the possibility of total victory. Trump and Macron offer each side a glimpse of the distance between victory might look like — and a rebuke to those who seek it.

Megan McArdle, a Washington Post opinions columnist, is a former columnist for Bloomberg View and author of "The Up Side of Down: Why Falling Well is the Key to Success."

Looking at the news

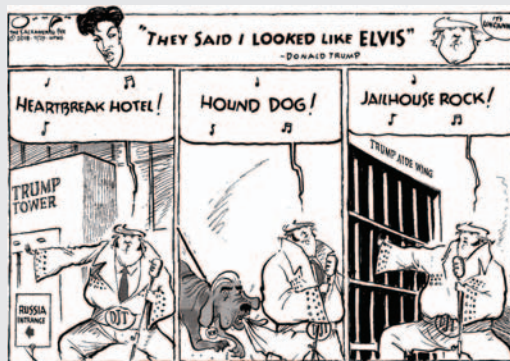
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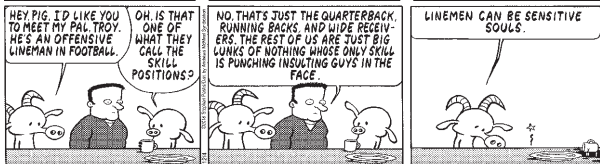
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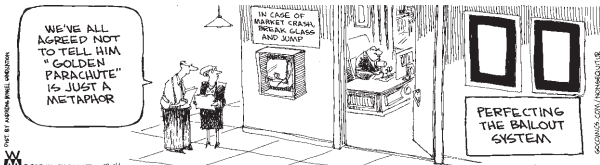
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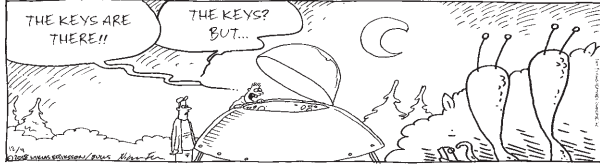
Non Sequitur



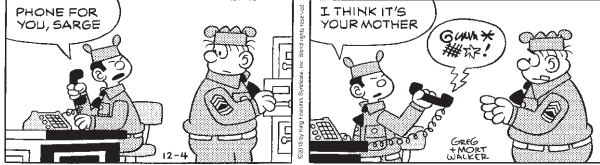
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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47					48			49			
50					51			52			
53					54			55			

ACROSS

- 1 Bog fuel
- 5 Festive
- 8 Baby's father
- 12 Gross
- 13 Conceit
- 14 Black, in verse
- 15 Journey
- 16 Cheese-topped diner order
- 18 Libya neighbor
- 20 Portals
- 21 French diarist
- 22 Crib
- 23 Plane parts
- 26 Arctic plains
- 30 Author Umberto
- 31 Billboards
- 32 "See ya!"
- 33 Underground passages
- 36 Backbone
- 38 Guitar's kin
- 39 Actress Lucy
- 40 Play place
- 43 Melodic
- 47 Wolfram
- 49 Naked
- 50 Slender woodwind
- 51 Assoc.
- 52 Schleps
- 53 Huff and puff

DOWN

- 54 Golfer Michelle
- 55 Small bills
- 27 MLB stat
- 28 Writer Rand
- 29 Observe
- 31 Pub pint
- 34 Lump of gold
- 35 Stretches (out)
- 36 Go astray
- 37 Colorado city
- 39 Fencing move
- 40 Halt
- 41 Hefty horn
- 42 Soon, poetically
- 43 Actress
- 44 Mythic man-goat
- 45 Incite
- 46 Minus
- 48 AAA job

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	O	L	D	R	A	P	C	A	G	E
A	L	I	A	E	V	A	O	N	N	O
T	I	D	I	F	A	V	A	B	E	A
S	O	O	T	H	E	E	N	A	C	T
A	L	A	N	B	E	A	N	T	O	E
R	E	C	S	E	L	E	S	T	R	I
F	I	A	T	S	E	A	N	B	E	A
G	R	E	T	E	L	E	G	O	I	S
L	I	M	A	B	E	A	N	O	D	E
O	L	I	N	T	H	U	D	O	R	A
P	E	A	S	S	A	P	S	L	A	P

12-4

CRYPTOQUIP

VCSG HA BCSSRS-YEXPGU

RPRISD JSBEHSR IVSGIA

ASQDR EYN, P PGISGN IE UPXS

CSD JPDICNQA UDOIPGUR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WELL-KNOWN CARTOON GUY WHO WAS INCREDIBLY SKILLED AT CLIMBING MOUNTAINS: POPEYE THE SCALER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals H


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KANSAS STATE — Announce

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/SPORTS BRIEFS



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

In this Jan. 8, 2018, photo, Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa runs during the second half of the college football playoff championship game against Georgia in Atlanta.

Commentary

CFP still needs to expand

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

Alabama? Always. Clemson? Four years running. Oklahoma? Make it three of the last four seasons for the Sooners.

Thank goodness for Notre Dame or the College Football Playoff would have been nothing but more of the same.

The Fighting Irish are the only CFP first-timers this season, and just the 10th school to reach the four-team playoff in five seasons. While there is more parity than ever in college football's middle and even upper-middle class, the national championship race is still reserved for a select few.

It has made the playoff feel like a regional event, particularly in the Southeast, when the goal was the exact opposite. The Big Ten has missed the last two playoffs. The Pac-12 has been left out three times. And it looks like college football is headed for a fourth straight season of Alabama playing Clemson in the playoff with what would be the third Tigers-Tide championship game.

The guardians of the postseason insist this is not a problem, but a desire to engage more fans in more parts of the country is one of the reasons playoff expansion is inevitable.

Fans, in this case, are also customers, whether they are buying tickets, watching the playoff on television or streaming it on their phones. The larger the audience, the bigger the profits.

"It was intended to be a national event and much of that intention is the manner it's been moved around and hasn't gone back to the same place more than once yet," Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby said Sunday, a few hours after the four-team field was unveiled. "I think it's intended to be a national event and I suppose if we got to the point where we felt like there were regional elements of it that were a concern, that would be something we spend some time talking about. But ultimately we want to get those deserving teams into the four-team event. We don't carry out our responsibilities if we don't continually evaluate. We're relatively early in the process now."

For now, making the playoff a "national event" means playing the games at different sites around the country. Location, location, location. This year's championship game is at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., on Jan. 7. Among this season's playoff participants, Oklahoma is closest to Northern California, about 1,400 miles.

This would have been a perfect season for an eight-team playoff. Just look at the rankings. The committee strained over Oklahoma, Georgia, Ohio State in the fourth spot. An argument could have been made for any of the three. Why not just put them all

in and add No. 7 Michigan and No. 8 USC?

Or give the Power Five conferences an automatic bid, eliminating some of the subjectivity and inconsistency in the selection process that drives fans nuts. Plus, every team that has a chance to win its conference is now a part of the playoff chase in November. Add three wild cards so talking heads and fans can stillicker over what teams are best — a tradition as old as sports. Maybe reserve a spot for the best team outside the Power Five conferences. Those fan bases might not be as large, but there are five conferences with 60 schools so why not keep them involved, too?

How's this for a national event:

No. 1 Alabama vs. No. 8 Washington;

No. 2 Clemson vs. No. 7 USC;

No. 3 Notre Dame vs. No. 6 Ohio State;

No. 4 Oklahoma vs. No. 5 Georgia.

Admittedly, there are logistics to sort out. Conferences would have to reassess how they crown their champions, eliminating the title games or trimming the regular season.

The arguments about whether Georgia or Michigan should get the final wild-card spot would have been more than enough to carry several hours of programming. Sure, it would still likely be Alabama and Clemson in the end, but television executives will tell you that once fans become engaged with a playoff they are more likely to stick around after their teams are out. It is one of the reasons the NCAA basketball tournament is such a long-running hit.

A small pool of championship contenders is not a new development in college football. The last team to win a national title that had never won one before was Florida in 1996.

"There's always been cycles in college football, going back the last 100 years," CFP executive director Bill Hancock said. "The fact is we're in a cycle now where Alabama's on an up, Clemson's on an up, Oklahoma's on an up. Those happen to just coincide with the playoff."

The Bowl Championship Series, or all its faults, was a huge step toward stretching college football's appeal from coast to coast. It made SEC fans care about Pac-12 games and vice versa. By doubling the number of participants from the BCS, the playoff intended to build on that.

If it's the same teams over and over again, that growth — and the financial growth that comes with it — will be stunted.

For now there is no great appetite for expansion among the conference commissioners in charge of the playoff.

"I'll get discussed in time," Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany said about expansion on BTN. "But in the short term I think we're going to be with four teams."

Briefly

Sliding Bulls fire coach Hoiberg

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The skidding Chicago Bulls fired coach Fred Hoiberg on Monday and promoted associate head coach Jim Boylen in hopes of lifting the team from the bottom of the standings.

The Bulls have been hit hard by injuries this season, but at 5-19 only two teams have worse records.

"Decisions like this one are never easy to make, however I felt this was the right choice for our organization at this time," said Jim Paxson, the team's executive vice president of basketball operations. "After a thorough evaluation, I elected to make this move with the overall development of our team in mind. As a team, I believe it is imperative that we make unflinching strides in the right direction and build the right habits to help put our players in the best position to evolve not only now, but into the future."

The Bulls have been riddled by injuries all year. Denzel Valentine (ankle), Kris Dunn (knee) and Bobby Portis (knee) have missed significant time and forward Lauri Markkanen didn't make his season debut until this past weekend because of an elbow injury.

The 7-foot Markkanen is perhaps the centerpiece of Chicago's rebuilding plan, but Hoiberg won't be around to see it through. He finishes his tenure in Chicago, where he played for four seasons and had a long history with general manager Gar Forman, with a record of 115-155 (.426) and a single playoff appearance, when the Bulls were ousted in the first round by Boston in 2017.

Boylen is a veteran but this will be his first time as an NBA head coach; he spent four years as the head coach at the University of Utah. Over 20 years in the NBA, he also has been an assistant in Houston, Golden State, Milwaukee, Indiana and San Antonio.

Panthers' Rivera takes over defensive calls

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Panthers coach Ron Rivera will take over defensive play calls from coordinator Eric Washington following the team's four-game losing streak.

The Panthers also fired defensive line coach Brady Hoke and assistant secondary/cornerbacks coach Jeff Imanura. The moves were announced after Rivera met with new owner David Tepper and general manager Marty Hurney on Monday morning.

Washington will remain defensive coordinator but will now oversee the front seven. He was the team's defensive line coach before being promoted to coordinator this past offseason.

Sam Mills III will lead the defensive line and Rivera will work with Richard Rodgers in the secondary.

Rahm wins in Bahamas for third title of year

NASSAU, Bahamas — Jon Rahm turned a potential shoot-out into a Bahamas breeze Sunday, closing with a 7-under 65 for a four-shot victory in the Hero World Challenge.

Starting the final round in a three-way tie with Tony Finau and Henrik Stenson, Rahm took the lead when Finau made bogey on the par-3 eighth hole, and the 24-year-old Spaniard never trailed for the rest of the day at Albany Golf Club.

Justin Rose, needing to finish in a three-way tie for second to return to No. 1 in the world, closed with a 65 and was in position to go back to the top of the ranking until Finau rolled in a 10-foot birdie putt for a 69 to finish alone in second.



KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI/AP

The Chicago Bulls fired head coach Fred Hoiberg, left, on Monday. His assistant Jim Boylen, right, was promoted to his first head coaching job in more than 20 years in the NBA.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NHL

No. 6 Volunteers trounce Islanders

By STEVE MEGARREE

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — No. 6 Tennessee prepared for its showdown with Gonzaga by posting its second straight lopsided victory at home.

Admiral Schofield scored 16 points, Kyle Alexander had 12 points and 10 rebounds and the Volunteers breezed to a 79-51 victory over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi on Sunday.

Grant Williams finished with 14 points and nine rebounds for Tennessee (6-1) in its last tuneup before a Dec. 9 matchup with No. 1 Gonzaga in the Jerry Colangelo Classic at Phoenix. Jordan Bowden also scored 14 points.

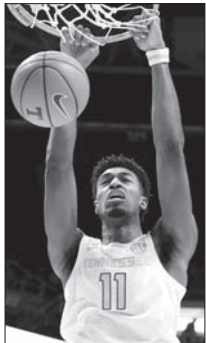
"We're going to go in there ready," Alexander said of the Gonzaga game. "We're going to use this week wisely. It's going to be a mental week for us. We're excited to have to work on some things."

With a roster dominated by upperclassmen, Tennessee had enough experience to avoid overlooking its two home dates that followed an overtime loss to No. 2 Kansas and preceded its date with Gonzaga.

Tennessee trounced Eastern Kentucky 95-67 on Wednesday before its blowout against Texas A&M-Corpus.

"It wasn't tough at all to focus on these two games," Schofield said. "We scheduled them. We've got to win them."

Texas A&M-Corpus (4-4) led 15-8 before Tennessee pulled ahead for good by going on a 14-0 run that lasted just over six min-



SHAWN MILLS/AP

Tennessee's Kyle Alexander dunks the ball against Texas A&M Corpus Christi on Sunday in Knoxville, Tenn.

utes. Tennessee outscored Texas A&M-Corpus 26-4 over the last 12 minutes of the first half to grab a 34-19 lead at the break.

Texas A&M-Corpus coach Willis Wilson said the Islanders' offense struggled once their ball movement slowed down and they stopped working the ball inside as often.

"We just have this tendency to kind of get away from what works for us," Wilson said. "When we do it, we're very good and we do it well. When we get away from it, we really fall off considerably."

No. 16 Ohio State rolls to win over Minnesota

By NICOLE KRAFT

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State wasted no time staking its claim as the team to beat in the Big Ten.

Andre Wesson scored 16 points, Caleb Wesson had 15, and No. 16 Ohio State beat Minnesota 79-59 on Sunday night in the conference opener for both teams.

C.J. Jackson and Musa Jallow each added 11 points, and Duane Washington Jr. and Kyle Young had 10 apiece to help the Buckeyes improve to 7-1.

"I'm proud of our guys' effort tonight against a really good Minnesota team," Ohio State coach

Chris Holtmann said. "I do think we benefited from the fact that they probably had some tired legs from Friday night. But take nothing away from our guys' approach. Our defense set the tone."

Amir Coffey led Minnesota (6-2) with 19 points, and Dupree McBrayer added 13.

Cold shooting and bad rebounding put Minnesota in a big early hole. The Gophers failed to grab an offensive rebound in the first 10 minutes of the game.

"If you are not going to bring good physical basketball, you are not going to win in this league," Gophers coach Richard Pitino said. "[Ohio State] is really good at simple good basketball."

"They are really physical — tough and physical. And they impose it on you."

Big picture: Ohio State dominated every aspect from scoring to rebounding, and overwhelmed its Big Ten rival from the start. Minnesota struggled to find the basket up close and at a distance, and never challenged.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Tampa Bay	27	19	8	1	39	107	79		
Toronto	27	19	8	0	38	98	70		
Edmonton	27	18	7	2	37	85	79		
Boston	26	14	8	4	32	71	64		
Montreal	27	10	15	2	29	83	84		
Ottawa	27	12	12	3	27	98	109		
Detroit	27	12	12	3	27	76	87		
Florida	25	10	10	5	25	83	91		

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	26	15	9	2	35	93	83
N.Y. Islanders	26	15	9	2	32	90	82
N.Y. Rangers	26	13	9	4	29	86	78
Carolina	26	12	10	4	28	66	71
Pittsburgh	26	10	12	4	29	83	84
Philadelphia	25	11	12	2	24	76	88
New Jersey	25	9	11	5	23	74	86

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	27	18	8	1	37	88	66
Colorado	27	16	6	5	37	97	72
Winnipeg	26	16	8	2	34	91	77
Dallas	27	14	10	3	31	74	71
Minnesota	26	14	10	2	30	83	76
Chicago	26	9	14	5	23	77	104
St. Louis	25	10	13	2	21	74	85

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	27	10	9	8	34	91	76
Anaheim	29	14	10	5	33	70	83
San Jose	28	13	10	5	35	85	99
Vegas	28	14	11	2	29	82	78
Edmonton	26	13	11	2	28	70	70
Los Angeles	27	10	15	2	21	58	81
Vancouver	29	11	15	3	25	82	102
Arizona	27	10	15	2	21	58	81

Notes: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Saturday's games

Ottawa 6, San Jose 2	Montreal 5, N.Y. Rangers 2
Dallas 5, Minnesota 3	Winnipeg 4, New Jersey 3, OT
N.Y. Islanders 3, Columbus 2	Tampa Bay 5, Florida 4, OT
Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 2	Detroit 4, Boston 1
Arizona 6, St. Louis 1	Nashville 5, Chicago 2
Edmonton 2, Vegas 1	

Sunday's games

Anaheim 6, Washington 3	Winnipeg 4, N.Y. Rangers 3, SO
Dallas 5, Colorado 2	Colorado 2, Detroit 0
Calgary 3, Chicago 1	Los Angeles 2, Carolina 0

Monday's games

Tampa Bay 4 at Nashville	Buffalo at Nashville
Winnipeg 4 at New Jersey	Boston at Florida
Calgary at Columbus	Los Angeles 4 at Pittsburgh
Ottawa at Montreal	Tampa Bay at Detroit
Toronto at Buffalo	Washington at Vancouver
Minnesota at Vancouver	Arizona at Anaheim

Wednesday's games

Edmonton at St. Louis	Chicago at Anaheim
Carolina at San Jose	

Saturday

Canadiens 5, Rangers 2

Carolina	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edmonton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

First Period—1. Los Angeles, Martin 2 (Muzzin, Brown), 17:47. 2. Los Angeles, Clifford 4 (Carter), 19:07.

Shots on Goal—Carolina 12-8-14-34. Los Angeles 13-12-10-35.

Power-play opportunities—Carolina 0 of 4; Los Angeles 0 of 4.

Goals—Carolina—Mrazek 3-4-2 (34 shots-33 saves). Los Angeles, Quick 1-4 (24 shots-22 saves). Chicago, Crawford 1-5 (41-38).

A-17:546 (18,230), T-2:37.

Flames 3, Blackhawks 2

Calgary	1	1	2	0	2	0	2
Chicago	1	1	0	0	1	0	1

First Period—1. Calgary, Monahan 15 (Gormley, Gaudreau), 10:07. 2. Chicago, Toews 12, 11:33.

Second Period—3. Calgary, Lindholm 12 (Monahan, Gaudreau), 7:38 (pp.). 4. Calgary, Ryan 10 (Gormley, Gaudreau), 13:20. 5. Chicago, Strome 5 (DeBrincat, Crawford), 15:45 (pp.).

Shots on Goal—Calgary 18-11-12-41. Chicago 6-10-8-24.

Power-play opportunities—Calgary 2 of 6; Chicago 1 of 4.

Goals—Calgary—Smith 8-7-1 (24 shots-22 saves). Chicago, Crawford 5-1 (41-38).

Avalanche 2, Red Wings 0

Colorado	1	1	2	0	2	0	2
Detroit	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Second Period—Colorado, Mackinnon 19 (Lundeskog, Rantanen), 4:54 (pp.).

Third Period—Colorado, Lundeskog 16 (Rantanen, Mackinnon), 19:01.

Shots on Goal—Colorado 7-13-9-29. Detroit 13-6-5-24.

Power-play opportunities—Colorado 1 of 3; Detroit 0 of 3.

Goals—Colorado, Varlamov 10-5-3 (21 shots-34 saves). Detroit, Bernier 3-6-3 (28-27).

A-18,248 (20,000), T-2:32.



NICK WASS/AP

Anaheim defenseman Hampus Lindholm, top right, celebrates his goal against Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby (30) with Ryan Kesler (17) and Nick Ritchie during the third period on Sunday in Washington. The Ducks won 6-5.

Sharks 3, Canadiens 1

San Jose	2	1	0	3	0	3	0
Montreal	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

First Period—1. San Jose, Braun 1, 2:55. 2. San Jose, Burns 4 (Ekarlsson, Pavelski), 10:29 (pp.).

Second Period—3. Montreal, Petry 3 (Shaw, Drouin), 12:15. 4. San Jose, Pavelski 17 (Burns, Couture), 15:51.

Third Period—None.

Shots on Goal—San Jose 11-11-7-29. Montreal 9-10-22-41.

Power-play opportunities—San Jose 1 of 4; Montreal 0 of 2.

Goals—San Jose, Jones 10-6-3 (41 shots-40 saves). Montreal, Price 8-8-4 (29-26).

A-20,301 (21,288), T-2:23.

Jets 4, Rangers 3 (SO)

Winnipeg	0	0	3	0	4	0	4
N.Y. Rangers	1	2	0	0	3	0	3

First Period—1. N.Y. Rangers, Fast 2 (Zibanejad, Staal), 17:32.

Second Period—2. N.Y. Rangers, Staal 2 (Strome, Andersson), 12:11. 3. N.Y. Rangers, Kreider 14 (Zibanejad, Pionk), 18:54.

Third Period—4. Winnipeg, Scheifele 16 (Morrissey, Wheeler), 2:10 (pp.). 5. Winnipeg, Roslovic 2 (Perreault, Trouba), 4:36. 6. Winnipeg, Little 5 (Trouba, Ehlers), 17:30.

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 11-13-10-34. N.Y. Rangers 4-7-6-15.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 1 of 4; N.Y. Rangers 0 of 2.

Goals—Winnipeg, Hellebuyck 11-7-1 (19 shots-16 saves). N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 9-8-5 (42-39).

A-17,464 (18,006), T-2:42.

Ducks 6, Capitals 5

Anaheim	1	2	3	6	0	6	0
Washington	1	2	0	3	5	0	5

First Period—1. Washington, Backstrom 10 (Carlson, Ovechkin), 6:41. 2. Washington, Stephenson 2 (Dowd, Jakin), 8:08. 3. Anaheim, Getzlaf 8 (Oberg, Rakell), 9:24. 4. Washington, Wilson 8 (Carlson, Backstrom), 10:19.

Second Period—5. Washington, Kuznetsov 7 (Connolly), 4:59. 6. Washington, Dowd 4 (Jakin, Stephenson), 13:20. 7. Anaheim, Cogliano 2 (Getzlaf, Larson), 14:21. 8. Anaheim, Rakell 4 (Henricsson), 15:26.

Third Period—9. Anaheim, Aberg 8 (Lindholm, Kase), 7:16 (pp.). 10. Anaheim, Lindholm 3 (Kase, Kesler), 8:01 (pp.). 11. Anaheim, Aberg 9 (Getzlaf, Sherwood), 14:55.

Shots on Goal—Anaheim 9-7-25-32. Washington 11-8-13-32.

Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 2 of 3; Washington 1 of 5.

Goals—Anaheim, Miller 4-2-1 (21 shots-34 saves). Washington, Holtby 10-6-2 (25-19).

A-18,506 (18,277), T-2:35.

Roundup

Aberg scores twice in 3rd, Ducks stop Caps' streak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pontus Aberg scored twice in the third period, giving Anaheim the lead with 5:05 remaining, and the Ducks stopped Washington's seven-game winning streak with a 6-5 victory Sunday.

The Ducks trailed 5-1 in the second before rallying for their fourth consecutive victory. Ryan Getzlaf had a goal and two assists and Rickard Rakell had a goal and an assist in the finale of a five-game trip.

Evgeny Kuznetsov and Chandler Stephenson each had a goal and an assist for Washington, which chased John Gibson after scoring three times in the first part of the first period.

Jets 4, Rangers 3 (SO): Mark Scheifele started Winnipeg's third-period comeback and scored the deciding goal in the shootout against host New York.

Jack Roslovic and Bryan Little also scored in the third as the Jets erased a 3-0 deficit and won their third straight.

Henrik Lundqvist made 39 saves throughout overtime as the Rangers lost for the fourth time in five games.

Flames 3, Blackhawks 2: Sean Monahan and Elias Lindholm each had a goal and an assist and visiting Calgary beat Chicago to take the Pacific Division lead.

Derek Ryan also scored, and Mike Smith made 22 saves for the Flames. Jonathan Toews and Dylan Strome scored for struggling Chicago, which dropped its fourth straight and lost for the sixth time in seven games.

The Blackhawks fell to 3-8-2 since Jeremy Colliton replaced fired coach Joel Quenneville.

Avalanche 2, Red Wings 0: Semyon Varlamov made 24 saves for his 24th career shutout and first of the season and Colorado beat host Detroit to stretch its points streak to 11 games at 9-0-2.

Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and an assist, and Gabriel Landeskog also scored.

Sharks 3, Canadiens 1: Martin Jones made 40 saves and visiting San Jose beat Montreal to snap a four-game skid.

Justin Braun, Brent Burns and Joe Pavelski scored to help San Jose improve to 13-10-5. Jones is 7-1-0 in his career against Montreal.

Kings 2, Hurricanes 0: Alec Martinez scored with 2:13 left. Jonathan Quick stopped 34 shots for his 50th career shutout and host Los Angeles defeated Carolina.

Martinez tipped Jake Muzzin's pass past goalie Petr Mrazek to help the Kings end a two-game skid. Kyle Clifford added an empty-net goal with 53 seconds remaining.

NFL

American Conference

	East				
	W	L	T	Pct	PF PA
New England	7	5	0	.583	247 223
Miami	6	6	0	.500	244 300
Buffalo	4	8	0	.333	178 293
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	243 307
	South				
Houston	9	3	0	.750	302 235
Indianapolis	6	6	0	.500	325 279
Tennessee	6	6	0	.500	221 245
Jacksonville	4	8	0	.333	203 243
	North				
Pittsburgh	7	4	1	.625	346 282
Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	297 214
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	286 371
Cleveland	4	7	1	.375	266 312
	West				
Kansas City	10	2	0	.833	444 327
L.A. Chargers	9	3	0	.750	340 249
San Francisco	6	6	0	.500	276 362
Oakland	2	10	0	.167	220 367

National Conference

	East				
	W	L	T	Pct	PF PA
Dallas	7	5	0	.583	247 223
Washington	6	5	0	.545	220 229
Philadelphia	5	6	0	.455	230 253
N.Y. Giants	4	8	0	.333	267 315
	South				
New Orleans	10	2	0	.833	419 269
Carolina	6	6	0	.500	304 306
Tampa Bay	5	7	0	.417	318 355
	North				
Chicago	8	6	0	.567	344 241
Minnesota	6	5	1	.542	275 270
Green Bay	4	7	1	.375	281 287
Detroit	4	8	0	.333	254 315
	West				
L.A. Rams	11	0	0	.917	419 298
Seattle	7	5	0	.583	319 299
Arizona	3	9	0	.250	175 310
San Francisco	2	10	0	.167	255 336

Thursday's division
Dallas 13, New Orleans 10
Sunday's games
Jacksonville 6, Indianapolis 0
Tampa Bay 24, Carolina 17
Houston 29, Cleveland 13
Baltimore 26, Atlanta 16
Arizona 20, Green Bay 17
Miami 21, Buffalo 17
Denver 24, Cincinnati 10
L.A. Rams 39, Detroit 16
N.Y. Giants 30, Chicago 27, OT
Tennessee 26, N.Y. Jets 22
Kansas City 40, Oakland 33
New England 24, Minnesota 10
Seattle 43, San Francisco 16
L.A. Chargers 33, Pittsburgh 30
Monday's game
Washington at Philadelphia
Thursday, Dec. 6
Jacksonville at Tennessee
Sunday, Dec. 9
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
N.Y. Giants at Washington
Atlanta at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Houston
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo
Carolina at Cleveland
New England at Miami
Philadelphia at Dallas
Pittsburgh at Oakland
L.A. Rams at Chicago
Monday, Dec. 10
Minnesota at Seattle

Jaguars' defense shuts down Luck, Colts

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — And briefly Ramsey reached out and Jalen offered to help Andrew Luck off the ground, only to quickly withdraw his hand and walk away.

Psych! Ramsey and the Jacksonville Jaguars refused to give the Indianapolis Colts anything, turning in one of the most dominant defensive performances in franchise history.

"Truthfully, I do that almost every week," Ramsey said of his fake-out moment with Luck. "People just caught it this week."

The Jaguars (4-8) needed that kind of defensive effort to make up for a lackluster offense. They stopped a seven-game slide and snapped Indy's five-game winning streak, leaving the Colts (6-11) in need of some help to get back into the AFC wild-card picture.

Ramsey was at his best while playing through a knee injury. He helped hold T.Y. Hilton to eight catches for 77 yards and also made a game-ending tackle on Erik Swoope with 8 seconds remaining.

Jaguars 6, Colts 0
Indianapolis 0 0 0 0-0
Jacksonville 0 0 0 0-0

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Jac	FG Lambo 30, 2:03			
Jac	FG Lambo 37, 11:42			
Ind	First downs 19	Ind 11		
	Total Net Yards 265	Ind 211		
	Rushes-yards 16-41	Ind 27-79		
	Passing 224	Ind 132		
	Punt Returns 2-13	Ind 1-8		
	Kickoff Returns 0-0	Ind 0-0		
	Interceptions Ret. 0-0	Ind 1-10		
	Comp-Att-Int 33-52, 18-24	Ind 18-24		
	Sacked-Yards Lost 3-24	Ind 3-18		
	Punts 6-49, 7-70	Ind 4-74		
	Fumbles-Lost 2-1	Ind 2-1		
	Penalties-Yards 6-65	Ind 7-47		
	Time of Possession 30:27	Ind 29:33		

RUSHING—Indianapolis, Mack 2-16, Luck 2-16, Hines 4-5, Pascal 1-2, Ebron 1 (minus 9). **Jacksonville, Hyde** 13-36, Kessler 5-28, Yeldon 8-16, Westbrook 1 (minus 1).

PASSING—Indianapolis, Luck 33-52-1-245, Jacksonville, Kessler 18-24-0-150. **RECEIVING—Indianapolis, Ebron** 10-81, Hines 9-50, Hilton 8-77, Innan 2-14, Pascal 1-16, Mack 1-6, Swoope 1-4, Wilkins 1-5. **Jacksonville, Wilson** 6-60, Babin 3-40, Westbrook 3-25, O'Shaughnessy 2-19, Cole 2-16, Hyde 1-1.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Indianapolis 23-132, Woods 2-11, Brown 2-8, Golf 2 (minus 2). **Detroit, Blount** 16-61, Riddick 8-32, Zeener 1-7, Stafford 1-7.

PASSING—Los Angeles, Goff 17-33-1-240, Stafford 10-24-0-125, Elliott 3-10-0-0.

RECEIVING—Los Angeles, Woods 5-67, Coles 4-62, Gurley 3-33, Higbee 2-59, Reynolds 2-19, Everett 1-7. **Detroit, Elliott** 7-35, Toileto 4-30, Golladay 3-50, Riddick 3-26, Tjones 1-25, Decker 1-11, Wilson 1-8.

FOURTH QUARTER
La—Gurley 13 run (Zuerlein kick), 6:53.
Det—FG Prater 35, 2:54.
La—Gurley 2 run (Zuerlein kick), 1:54.
A—69:03.

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
La	FG Zuerlein 24, 3:17			
Det	FG Prater 28, 12:24			
La	Woods 8 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 2:28			
La	FG Zuerlein 47, 4:44			
Det	FG Prater 29, 7:56			
La	FG Zuerlein 48, 5:46			
Det	Decker 11 pass from Stafford (Prater kick), 4:06			
La	Gurley 13 run (Zuerlein kick), 6:53			
Det	FG Prater 35, 2:54			
La	Gurley 2 run (Zuerlein kick), 1:54			
A	69:03			

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Los Angeles 23-132, Woods 2-11, Brown 2-8, Golf 2 (minus 2). **Detroit, Blount** 16-61, Riddick 8-32, Zeener 1-7, Stafford 1-7.

PASSING—Los Angeles, Goff 17-33-1-240, Stafford 10-24-0-125, Elliott 3-10-0-0.

RECEIVING—Los Angeles, Woods 5-67, Coles 4-62, Gurley 3-33, Higbee 2-59, Reynolds 2-19, Everett 1-7. **Detroit, Elliott** 7-35, Toileto 4-30, Golladay 3-50, Riddick 3-26, Tjones 1-25, Decker 1-11, Wilson 1-8.



Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley (30) pushes Detroit Lions cornerback Darius Slay during the first half Sunday in Detroit. The Rams won 30-16 to clinch the NFC West.

Gurley-led Rams clinch NFC West title

DETROIT — The Los Angeles Rams returned to their lockers in the Motor City, where NFC West championship shirts and hats were waiting to be worn.

The victors, though, refuse to be spoiled by this accomplishment. Todd Gurley ran for 132 yards and two touchdowns to help the Rams overcome a sputtering start to beat the Lions and clinch a second straight division title. "We're not satisfied yet," said defensive tackle Aaron Donald, who had two sacks and forced a fumble. "But we're headed in the right direction."

The Rams (11-1) moved a step closer to earning home-field advantage in the NFC playoffs, taking a one-game lead over New Orleans.

"We're in a position right now that we feel good about," coach Sean McVay said. "If we take care of our business, all the rest of that stuff takes care of itself."

Rams 30, Lions 16

San Francisco 0 3 7 6-16
Seattle 6 14 14 43
First Quarter
Sea—Brown 4 pass from R.Wilson (kick failed), 1:25.

Second Quarter
Sea—Lockett 52 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 13:41.
Sea—Baldwin 1 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 1:17.
SF—FG Gould 45, 0:00.

Third Quarter
Sea—Penny 20 run (Janikowski kick), 14:48.
SF—Pettis 17 pass from Mullens (Goff kick), 11:24.

Fourth Quarter
Sea—Brown 18 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 14:17.
SF—Pettis 75 pass from Mullens (run failed), 4:06.
Sea—FG Janikowski 40, 7:46.
Sea—Wagner 98 interception return (kick failed), 4:04.
A—69:09.

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Sea	First downs 24	SF 24		
	Total Net Yards 31	SF 452		
	Rushes-yards 23-66	SF 29-168		
	Passing 386	SF 163		
	Punt Returns 2-13	SF 1-10		
	Kickoff Returns 4-109	SF 2-111		
	Interceptions Ret. 0-0	SF 1-98		
	Comp-Att-Int 30-48, 11-17, 0	SF 30-48, 11-17, 0		
	Sacked-Yards Lost 3-28	SF 3-28, 3-22		
	Punts 5-40, 4-49, 8	SF 5-40, 4-49, 8		
	Fumbles-Lost 3-2	SF 3-2, 0		
	Penalties-Yards 13-129	SF 10-100		
	Time of Possession 32:30	SF 27:30		

RUSHING—San Francisco, J.Wilson 15-61, Breida 5-46, Mullens 2-1, Pettis 1 (minus 2). **Seattle, Carson** 13-69, Penny 7-65, Wilson 4-14, Lockett 1-10, Davis 4-10.

PASSING—San Francisco, J.Wilson 30-48-1-414, **Seattle, R.Wilson** 11-17-0-185.

RECEIVING—San Francisco, Mullens 30-48-1-414, **Seattle, R.Wilson** 11-17-0-185, Breida 5-46, Juszyszky 3-20, Tylor 1-11, **Seattle, J.Brown** 3-67, Carson 3-36, Baldwin 2-22, Lockett 1-12, Vannett 1-4, Turner 1-1.

Wilson's big day leads Seahawks past 49ers

SEATTLE — Russell Wilson threw three first-half touchdowns on just four completions and finished with four TD passes, and the Seahawks won their third straight by beating the 49ers.

Seattle (7-5) stayed in the middle of the NFC playoff race by jumping to a 20-0 lead and cruising to its ninth straight victory over its NFC West foe, Bobby Wagner capped a blowout with a 98-yard interception return touchdown.

Wilson wasn't asked to do much in the first half, but the little he did found the end zone. According to Sportradar, Wilson throwing three touchdowns on four completions made for the fewest TDs/completions in a first half dating to 1991. The previous low was six.

Seahawks 43, 49ers 16

San Francisco 0 3 7 6-16
Seattle 6 14 14 43
First Quarter
Sea—Brown 4 pass from R.Wilson (kick failed), 1:25.

Second Quarter
Sea—Lockett 52 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 13:41.
Sea—Baldwin 1 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 1:17.
SF—FG Gould 45, 0:00.

Third Quarter
Sea—Penny 20 run (Janikowski kick), 14:48.
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Sea—Brown 18 pass from R.Wilson (Janikowski kick), 14:17.
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Sea—Wagner 98 interception return (kick failed), 4:04.
A—69:09.

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Sea	First downs 24	SF 24		
	Total Net Yards 31	SF 452		
	Rushes-yards 23-66	SF 29-168		
	Passing 386	SF 163		
	Punt Returns 2-13	SF 1-10		
	Kickoff Returns 4-109	SF 2-111		
	Interceptions Ret. 0-0	SF 1-98		
	Comp-Att-Int 30-48, 11-17, 0	SF 30-48, 11-17, 0		
	Sacked-Yards Lost 3-28	SF 3-28, 3-22		
	Punts 5-40, 4-49, 8	SF 5-40, 4-49, 8		
	Fumbles-Lost 3-2	SF 3-2, 0		
	Penalties-Yards 13-129	SF 10-100		
	Time of Possession 32:30	SF 27:30		

RUSHING—San Francisco, J.Wilson 15-61, Breida 5-46, Mullens 2-1, Pettis 1 (minus 2). **Seattle, Carson** 13-69, Penny 7-65, Wilson 4-14, Lockett 1-10, Davis 4-10.

PASSING—San Francisco, J.Wilson 30-48-1-414, **Seattle, R.Wilson** 11-17-0-185.

RECEIVING—San Francisco, Mullens 30-48-1-414, **Seattle, R.Wilson** 11-17-0-185, Breida 5-46, Juszyszky 3-20, Tylor 1-11, **Seattle, J.Brown** 3-67, Carson 3-36, Baldwin 2-22, Lockett 1-12, Vannett 1-4, Turner 1-1.

Titans shake off ugly start, rally to edge Jets

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Marcus Mariota and the Titans could not have started much uglier.

They showed they can finish. Mariota threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Corey Davis with 36 seconds left, and Tennessee rallied from a 16-point deficit and beat the New York Jets.

The Titans (6-6) snapped a two-game slide that kept them on the fringes of the AFC playoff chase. Mariota, who had an interception returned for a touchdown in the first quarter, notched his 12th game-winning drive.

"Marcus isn't going to be the guy giving pep talks," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said of his quarterback. "He's very calm, cool, collected. He takes control of the huddle, and you can see him in the most critical situations he's at his best. And so that's great to see."

Titans 26, Jets 22

New York 10 6 6 0-22
Tennessee 6 6 7 13-26
First Quarter
NYJ—FG Myers 54, 9:35.

Second Quarter
NYJ—Tebow 31 interception return (Myers kick), 7:50.

Third Quarter
NYJ—FG Myers 34, 2:51.
Ten—Fitzpatrick 12 pass from Mariota (kick blocked), 5:7.

Fourth Quarter
NYJ—FG Myers 38, 10:39.
Ten—Henry 1 run (Succop kick), 7:44.
NYJ—FG Myers 39, 2:28.

Fourth Quarter
Ten—FG Succop 24, 5:39.
Ten—Davis 11 pass from Mariota (Succop kick), 3:36.
A—69:04.

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
NYJ	First downs 15	Ten 22		
	Total Net Yards 280	Ten 403		
	Rushes-yards 33-156	Ten 22-130		
	Passing 124	Ten 274		
	Punt Returns 1-4	Ten 0-0		
	Kickoff Returns 2-62	Ten 1-35		
	Interceptions Ret. 1-31	Ten 1-31		
	Comp-Att-Int 17-30, 1-1	Ten 17-30, 1-1		
	Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0	Ten 0-0		
	Punts 6-44, 7-38	Ten 6-44, 7-38		
	Fumbles-Lost 3-28	Ten 3-28, 3-22		
	Penalties-Yards 11-96	Ten 11-96		
	Time of Possession 31:22	Ten 26:38		

RUSHING—New York, Crowell 21-98, Murray 6-19, A.Roberts 1-18, Cannon 4-48, Crowell 4-49, Herndon 2-31, Leggett 2-18, Ertz 2-9, A.Roberts 1-10, Cannon 3-42, Murray 1 (minus 4), **Tennessee, Mariota** 20-35-1-282.

PASSING—New York, Crowell 17-30-1-282, **Tennessee, Mariota** 20-35-1-282.

RECEIVING—New York, R.Anderson 4-48, Crowell 4-49, Herndon 2-31, Leggett 2-18, Ertz 2-9, A.Roberts 1-10, Cannon 3-42, Murray 1 (minus 4), **Tennessee, Mariota** 20-35-1-282, **D.Watson** 3-42, **Pratt** 1-4.



Colts quarterback Andrew Luck scrambles away from Jaguars defensive end Yannick Ngakoue, right, during the first half Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla. The Jaguars won 6-0.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Los Angeles 23-132, Woods 2-11, Brown 2-8, Golf 2 (minus 2). **Detroit, Blount** 16-61, Riddick 8-32, Zeener 1-7, Stafford 1-7.

NFL

Texans win 9th straight

By KRISTIE RIEKKE
Associated Press

HOUSTON — After the Houston Texans extended their franchise record with a ninth straight win on Sunday, J.J. Watt was asked to reflect on how far the team has come in the past year.

"I was on the couch a year ago so this is a lot better," said Watt, who missed the last 11 games of Houston's 4-12 2017 season with a broken leg. "I was in a lot of pain. So it's good for us to be winning ... this is what it's supposed to feel like. Honestly this is how you dream it up."

Deshaun Watson threw a touchdown pass and the Texans intercepted rookie Baker Mayfield three times, returning one for a score, to get the 29-13 victory over the Cleveland Browns on Sunday that extended the streak.

The Texans (9-3), who opened the season 0-3, haven't lost since Sept. 23 to take a commanding lead atop the AFC South. While they appreciate what they've done to turn things around, they're quick to note that they still have plenty of work left to do.

"It means a lot especially from where we came from 0-3 ... but it's not the Super Bowl so we're still fighting," receiver DeAndre Hopkins said.

Houston raced out to a 23-0 halftime lead and added two second-half field goals by Kaiir Fairbairn to give him five on Sunday.

Mayfield, the top overall pick in this year's draft, had his worst game of the season, throwing three interceptions for the first time since he was a freshman at



SAM CRAIG/AP

The Texans' Justin Reid (20) breaks up a pass intended for Cleveland Browns receiver Jarvis Landry on Sunday in Houston.

Texas Tech in 2013. He entered the game having thrown nine touchdown passes with just one interception in the past three games as the Browns (4-7-1) won consecutive games for the first time since 2014.

Mayfield lamented the mistakes he made in this one.

"[If] I would've taken care of the ball, this game would've been very close," he said.

He finished with 397 yards passing and had a touchdown pass in the fourth quarter after throwing a career-best four in a win over the Bengals last week. Houston's fearsome pass rush, led by Watt and Jadeveon Clowney didn't sack Mayfield, but they hurried and harassed him for much of the day. His interceptions all came before halftime to help the Texans build the big early lead.

"It's probably what I'm feeling too dangerous in the first half, but he was feeling a little more dangerous in the second half," Watt said.

Cleveland continued to struggle in late-season games, and the Browns fell to 9-39 in December and January games since 2008.

Texans 29, Browns 13

Cleveland	0	0	7	6-13
Houston	10	13	3	3-29
Hou—FG Fairbairn 35, 8:12.				
Hou—J.Thomas 11 pass from Watson (Fairbairn kick), 38.				
Second Quarter				
Hou—Cunningham 38 interception return (Fairbairn kick), 7:26.				
Hou—FG Fairbairn 42, 3:19.				
Hou—FG Fairbairn 48, 1:54.				
Third Quarter				
Cle—Chubb 2 run (G.Joseph kick), 9:39.				
Hou—FG Fairbairn 53, 5:26.				
Fourth Quarter				
Hou—FG Fairbairn 38, 5:46.				
Hou—Higgins 17 pass from Mayfield (Fairbairn kick), 2:58.				

Cle	Hou
First downs	20 25
Total Net Yards	428 384
Rushes-yards	9-31 39-187
Passing	19-127
Punt Returns	0-0 1-0
Kickoff Returns	5-107 12-123
Interceptions Ret.	0-0 3-56
Fumbles-Lost	29-3 22-3-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	0-0 4-27
Punts	2-45.5 3-42.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1 0-0
Penalties-Yards	6-45 5-77
Time of Possession	22:25 27:35

RUSHING—Cleveland, 9-31: Houston, Miller 19-103, Blue 13-54, Watson 7-30.
RECEIVING—Cleveland, Mayfield 29-43-339; Houston, Watson 22-31-0-224.
DEFENSIVE—Cleveland, Landry 6-103, Higgins 4-62, Hilliard 4-40, Callaway 3-46, Chubb 3-41, Njoku 3-38, Perimeter 2-26, Johnson 2-12, DeValve 1-19, Ratley 1-12, Houston, Hopkins 7-91, Carter 6-32, Thomas 3-32, D.Thompson 3-32, Atkins 1-13, Griffin 1-12, Miller 1-12.

Chiefs 40, Raiders 33

Kansas City	0	9	14	7-40
Oakland	0	7	9	17-33
First Quarter				
KC—Kelce 3 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 12:11.				
Second Quarter				
KC—FG Butker 29, 7:42.				
Oak—Martin 1 run (Carlson kick), 10:41.				

KC—Kelce 6 pass from Mahomes (kick blocked), 10:7.
Third Quarter
Oak—FG Carlson 50, 11:06.
Oak—Hill 1 run (Butker kick), 5:48.
Oak—Cook 24 pass from Carr (run failed), 3:22.
Oak—Hill 13 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 0:41.

Fourth Quarter
Oak—L.Smith 1 pass from Carr (Carlson kick), 11:06.
Oak—Ateman 9 pass from Carr (Carlson kick), 6:46.
KC—C.Conley 2 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 1:54.
Oak—FG Carlson 44, 3:30.
A—54,255.

KC	Oak
First downs	25 28
Rushes-yards	459 281
Total Net Yards	301-74 28-171
Passing	295 271
Punt Returns	0-0 0-0
Kickoff Returns	5-80 3-56
Interceptions Ret.	0-0 0-0
Comp-Att Int	23-38-0 29-38-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	0-0 1-14
Fumbles-Lost	3-0 3-0
Punts	1-1 4-3
Time of Possession	29:14 30:46

RUSHING—Kansas City: Mahomes 9-52, Ware 14-47, Dam.Williams 5-38, Hill 3-37. **Oakland:** Richard 6-25, Martin 19-61, Ware 18-14, Washington 3-7.
RECEIVING—Kansas City: Mahomes 23-30-295, Oakland, Carr 29-38-0-285.
DEFENSIVE—Kansas City: Hill 6-168, De.Harris 3-39, C.Conley 3-25, Dam.Williams 2-7, Robinson 1-38, Hill 1-13, Ware 1-13. **Oakland:** Nelson 10-97, Cook 7-100, Richard 3-31, Roberts 3-25, Martin 2-16, Martin 2-6, Dw.Harris 1-9, L.Smith 1-1.

Next: Packers left to ponder future

FROM BACK PAGE

rares upheaval for a model franchise that last changed coaches during a season 75 years ago.

It's likely other coaches who are in trouble around the league will get a chance to ride things out through Week 17, but Cincinnati's Marvin Lewis, Jacksonville's Doug Marrone, the Jets' Todd Bowles and Carolina's Ron Rivera all should be wary. When Rivera was asked whether he's concerned about his job security after a 24-17 defeat at Tampa Bay dropped the Panthers to 6-6, this was the reply: "I'm not going to address that question. Do not ask that question again, please."

Alrighty, then. Rodgers is a two-time NFL MVP, and he was the Super Bowl MVP when the Packers beat the Pittsburgh Steelers in the big game in 2011, all under McCarthy.

Year after year more recently, though, Green Bay would reach the postseason only to wind up with so-close-but-so-far exits.

"We're just not executing well," Rodgers said, "and it's the same things over and over."

Not long after those words were spoken, team president Mark Murphy released a statement announcing that McCarthy was gone. Offensive coordinator Joe Philbin will fill in.

This season is essentially over; the Packers are a half-game out of last place in the NFC North. Now

they can start pondering their future—as can McCarthy.

He likely will get another chance elsewhere. Presumably, Rodgers will give some input on Green Bay's choice of a new coach. He turned 35 on Sunday, and the opportunities to win a second Lombardi Trophy are fading.

Cardinals 20, Packers 17

Arizona	0	7	3-20
Green Bay	0	10	0-17
Second Quarter			
GB—D.Adams 13 pass from Rodgers (Crosby kick), 11:29.			
ARI—Edmonds 6 run (Gonzalez kick), 4:42.			
GB—FG Crosby 27, 1:15.			
Third Quarter			
ARI—FG Gonzalez 44, 5:18.			
ARI—Edmonds 8 run (Gonzalez kick), 1:54.			
Fourth Quarter			
GB—A.Jones 8 run (Crosby kick), 5:26.			
ARI—FG Gonzalez 44, 1:41.			
A—77,234.			

ARI	GB
First downs	18 22
Total Net Yards	315 325
Rushes-yards	24-162 28-162
Passing	13-23 22-7
Punt Returns	3-14 2-25
Kickoff Returns	0-0 0-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0 0-0
Comp-Att Int	11-20-0 17-29-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-16 1-6
Fumbles-Lost	6-4-0 7-4-0
Penalties-Yards	7-49 7-43
Time of Possession	27:34 32:26

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS—
RUSHING—Arizona, 20-69, Edmonds 5-53, Rosen 2-32, Kirk 1-23, Lohan 1-5. **Green Bay:** Adams 8-50, Miles-Scantling 2-23, Rodgers 3-20, J.Williams 7-13.

PASSING—Arizona, Rosen 11-26-0-149, Green Bay, Rodgers 31-50-0-239.
RECEIVING—ARI, Edmonds 3-54, Fitzgerald 3-48, Edmonds 2-13, Sheffield 1-21, Seale-Jones 1-10, Johnson 1-3. **Green Bay:** Adams 8-50, Graham 8-50, A.Jones 4-16, J.Williams 4-14, Cobb 3-25, J.Williams 2-12, T.Y. Hilton 1-11, Tonyan 1-5.

FIELD GOALS—Green Bay, Crosby 4/9.

Firing: Despite 2010 Super Bowl win, coaching change makes sense

FROM BACK PAGE

move almost as stunning as its feeble showing against Arizona on Sunday, Mike McCarthy was canned.

The same McCarthy who was 125-77 in almost 13 seasons at the helm. The same McCarthy who guided the Packers to the 2010 championship. The same McCarthy who helped the Packers reach the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Yet, with what the Packers have become recently and where they appeared headed at 4-7-1 in a season when NFC wild-card berths are a far grab, it probably was the correct move to let McCarthy go.

The offense, even with Rodgers, has stagnated. The secondary, as it is pretty much every year, is ravaged by injuries. The offensive line is a mess more often than it is a plus.

And the skills of one of the great quarterbacks of his era—an era when offense is paramount for success—are being wasted.

McCarthy might find himself employed running another team in need of developing a quarterback (Jets? Buccaneers? Browns?) in 2019. For now, though, with the Packers severe underachieving and McCarthy unable to find answers against strong opponents or weak ones, his departure made sense.

"We haven't played very well," Rodgers said before being told McCarthy was fired. "We all take part in the disappointments and the failures that we've had this season. We've had a number of opportunities. ... We're not

executing the right way."

Rodgers has never started a game for another coach, and he deserves some input into who replaces McCarthy. Whoever that might be, the least of his problems is quarterback, barring more injuries to Rodgers, who turned 35 on Sunday. Rodgers should have a few excellent years left.

The Packers probably need to look into adding some talent through free agency before Rodgers is past his prime. That's rarely been the approach on the outside—yes, we know about Reggie White and Julius Peppers—but with Ted Thompson no longer the general manager, perhaps the thinking will change.

In the NFC North, where Chicago is on the rise and Minnesota has more overall talent than Green Bay, a quick infusion of talent is essential.

It would be somewhat ironic if McCarthy surfaced in Cleveland to work with Baker Mayfield. The Browns are the only other team to fire its head man thus far, and it would be surprising if Browns GM John Dorsey, who formerly worked for the Packers, isn't interested.

The Jets, who lost their sixth in a row in November's matchup at Browns on Sunday, almost certainly will be letting go of Todd Bowles soon. They also have a rookie QB in need of a guru.

Meanwhile, the Packers begin a search they rarely make. Since 2000, they've had two coaches, Mike Sherman and McCarthy.

Joe Philbin is the interim. Whoever is named in Green Bay, make sure Rodgers has a say.

Mahomes throws 4 TDs, Chiefs get past Raiders

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs still had plenty of firepower on offense even without star running back Kareem Hunt.

Mahomes threw four touchdown passes Sunday to join Peyton Manning as Tom Brady as the only QBs to reach the 40 TD mark through

12 games, sending the Chiefs to a 40-33 victory over the Oakland Raiders in the first game since releasing Hunt.

"The mindset of this team is whenever you get your opportunity, you make the most of it," Mahomes said. "I think every single game someone else starts up. We kept our mind on that and just

playing football, a game we love."

The Chiefs (10-2) cut ties with Hunt after a month-and-a-half surfaced on TMZ on Friday, showing him shoving and kicking a woman. No charges have been filed in the case from February, but the Chiefs let Hunt go because he misled them about the incident.

Spencer Ware replaced Hunt as starter and scored on a direct snap on fourth-and-goal from the 1 in the third quarter.

"That's my brother," Ware said about Hunt. "It's a tough situation. But like I said, the men in this circle, the men in our locker room, the organization, Chiefs kingdom — we got one goal to win the Super Bowl. We got to stay distraction free. I don't have anything else to say about that."

Mahomes did most of the rest of the damage against the Raiders (2-10) with his arm.

Mahomes has 41 TD passes on the season, joining Manning (44 in 2004, 41 in '13) and Brady (41 in 2007) as the only QBs with at least 40 in the first 12 games of a season.



Mahomes

NFL

Rivers leads Chargers rally over Steelers

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Philip Rivers watched Ben Roethlisberger do what the Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback so often does — lead a game-tying drive late in the fourth quarter — and decided it was time for the Los Angeles Chargers to do something they so rarely do: win a big one on the road against a team with Super Bowl aspirations of its own.

So the longtime Los Angeles quarterback gathered his teammates around him and delivered a very blunt message.

“It was ‘Let’s go win it,’” Rivers said. “‘Let’s make this the last drive and win it.’”

Done and done. Rivers drove the Chargers 64 yards in 11 plays to set up Michael Badgley’s 29-yard field goal on the final snap as the Los Angeles rallied for a 33-30 victory on Sunday night.

Badgley’s initial 39-yard attempt sailed wide left, but the Steelers were called for offside. Badgley’s ensuing 34-yard attempt was blocked, but Pittsburgh’s celebration was cut short when the Steelers were again flagged for crossing the line of scrimmage early. The Steelers jumped once more on Badgley’s 29-yard punt, but the Chargers gleefully declined the penalty as they spilled onto the field.

“There was no worry or doubt,” Badgley said. “It’s just one of those things where you stay tough. It’s a situation you never really plan



Don Weisner/AP

Chargers wide receiver Tyrell Williams makes a catch over Steelers cornerback Coty Sensabaugh in the first half Sunday in Pittsburgh. The Chargers won 33-30.

out there where you get three in a row like that. You just have to go do what you know how to do.”

Down 23-7 at the half, the Chargers (9-3) became the first visiting team to win in Pittsburgh after trailing by 16. The Steelers (7-4-1) had been 174-0-1 when up by that much at home. Now Pittsburgh heads into the final quarter of the season having its once comfortable lead in the AFC North trimmed to just a half-game over surging Baltimore (7-5). “Don’t need to panic,” Roeth-

lisberger said. “Don’t need to worry.”

Might be time to start. The Steelers have dropped two straight for the first time this season and seemingly had no answer for the Chargers in the second half.

Rivers completed 26 of 36 passes for 299 yards and two touchdowns for Los Angeles. Keenan Allen caught 14 passes for 148 yards and a score and Justin Jackson ran for 63 yards and a touchdown in place of injured starter Melvin Gordon. Desmond

King added a 73-yard punt return for a score as the Chargers bolstered their postseason chances by winning in Pittsburgh for just the fourth time in 19 tries.

“These guys, they believe,” Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn said. “When you believe in something strongly, you can will it to happen.”

Suddenly, a team that looked capable of making the Super Bowl appears to be in a bit of a tight spot with a somewhat daunting final month ahead that includes

games against New England and New Orleans.

“There’s a quarter left of football,” Pittsburgh receiver Antonio Brown said. “We’ve got to continue to figure out a way to win and get ourselves to the dance.”

Chargers 33, Steelers 30

L.A. Chargers	Pittsburgh	1	2	3	4	Total
13	10	0	0	7	30	
First Quarter						
Pit—Conner 1 run (Boswell kick), 9:20.						
Pit—Conner 1 run (kick failed), 4:41.						
LAC—Benjamin 46 pass from Rivers (Badgley kick), 1:04.						
Second Quarter						
Pit—FG Boswell 48, 2:40.						
Pit—A.Brown 28 pass from Roethlisberger (Boswell kick), 2:17.						
Third Quarter						
LAC—Kallen 10 pass from Rivers (Gates pass from Rivers), 1:43.						
Fourth Quarter						
LAC—King 73 punt return (KAllen pass from Rivers), 12:52.						
LAC—Jackson 18 run (Badgley kick), 8:09.						
Pit—Samuels 10 pass from Roethlisberger (Boswell kick), 4:10.						
LAC—FG Badgley 29, 3:00.						
A—61,069.						

First downs	LAC	Pit
Total Net Yards	22	23
Rushing-yards	22	36
Passing-yards	286	271
Punt Returns	1-73	2-9
Kickoff Returns	1-21	3-47
Interceptions Ret.	1-23	0-0
Comp-Att Int	26-30-0	29-45-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-13	1-10
Penalties	4-36-3	4-51-0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
Turnovers	5-90	7-59
Time of Possession	31:12	28:48

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Los Angeles, Jackson 8-63, Ekeler 13-21, Benjamin 1-1. Pittsburgh, Conner 15-60, Samuels 2-5.

PASSING—Los Angeles, Rivers 26-36-0. Pittsburgh, Roethlisberger 29-45-1.

RECEIVING—Los Angeles, KAllen 14-148, Keenan Allen 14-148, Justin Jackson 1-63, Desmond King 1-73. Pittsburgh, KAllen 1-19, Ty Williams 1-14, Pittsburgh, A.Brown 10-154, Smith-Schuster 6-42, McDonald 4-28, Samuels 3-20, Conner 3-14, Switzer 2-8, James 1-7.

MISS. FIELD GOALS—Los Angeles, Badgley 5-2.

Giants stun Bears with Rosas' field goal in OT

By TOM CANAVAN
Associated Press

Giants 30, Bears 27 (OT)
Chicago 7 7 0 13 0-27
New York 7 7 0 13 3-30

First Quarter
NYG—Odgetree 8 interception return (Manning kick), 14:14.
Chi—Shahen 2 pass from Daniel (Parker kick), 3:28.

Second Quarter
Chi—Hicks 1 run (Parker kick), 3:40.
NYG—FG Rosas 57, 3:00.

Third Quarter
NYG—R.Shepard 1 pass from Beckham (Rosas kick), 12:49.
NYG—Beckham 1 pass from Manning (Rosas kick), 5:58.

Fourth Quarter
Chi—FG Parker 36, 9:23.
NYG—FG Rosas 57, 1:49.
Chi—FG Miller 1 pass from Cohen (Parker kick), 3:00.

Overtime
NYG—FG Rosas 44, 5:57.
A—76,465.

	Chi	NYG
First downs	23	18
Total Net Yards	376	338
Rushing-yards	33-118	29-141
Passing	258	197
Punt Returns	2-15	3-36
Kickoff Returns	2-40	2-56
Interceptions Ret.	1-8	2-38
Comp-Att Int	27-40-3	20-36-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	6-50-5	3-22
Fumbles-Lost	5-90-5	7-44-3
Penalties-Yards	8-58	12-107
Time of Possession	33:13	33:13

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Chicago, Howard 16-76, Cohen 8-30, Mizell 3-7, Daniel 4-4, Hicks 1-1. New York, Barkley 24-125, Gallman 5-28.

PASSING—Chicago, Daniel 26-39-28, Cohen 19-31-0. New York, Manning 19-35-1, Beckham 1-1-0-49.

RECEIVING—Chicago, Cohen 12-156, Shahan 5-79, Gabriel 3-17, Mizell 2-16, Shaheen 2-5, Bellamy 1-8, Howard 1-1. Miller 1-1. New York, Ellison 4-42, S.Shahan 1-1, Barkley 2-59, Barkley 3-21, R.Shepard 2-59, Simonson 2-25, Fowler 1-11, Gallman 1-minus 2).

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants finally have a signature win to carry them through the rest of the season and maybe beyond.

While beating the NFC North-leading Bears wasn't pretty and involved blowing up a 10-point lead in the final 1:13, the Giants showed character in a wild game in the rain highlighted by trick plays — and a reminder of William “The Fridge” Perry.

The Giants (4-8) won for seventh time in 28 games over the past two seasons as Aldrick Rosas kicked a 44-yard field goal in overtime in a 30-27 win Sunday, snapping the Bears' five-game winning streak.

“The takeaway is, and I told the team this, some people are fond of talented people, some people are fond of smart people. I'm fond of tough, resilient people,” Giants coach Pat Shurmur said. “When you are trying to flip culture and when you are trying to build something, you have to dig in on that. There was some toughness and resiliency when they came back to tie things up.”

Rosas' third field goal of the game came on the opening series

of overtime. It was set up by a 29-yard run by rookie Saquon Barkley, who finished with 125 yards on 24 carries.

“It speaks to the resiliency of the guys,” Giants left tackle Nate Solder said after the team refused to fold following the Bears' late heroics. “It speaks about the type of guys we have in the locker room and we just got to keep doing it and moving forward and believing in each other and doing it together.”

The Giants didn't nail down the win until Janoris Jenkins knocked away a deep fourth-down pass to Taylor Gabriel after quarterback Chase Daniel fumbled on consecutive plays on the rainy afternoon to set up a fourth-and-8.

Chicago (8-4) forced overtime by getting a 21-yard field goal by Cody Parker and a 1-yard touchdown pass from halfback Tarik Cohen to Anthony Miller as time expired in the fourth quarter. The trick-play touchdown was set up by a recovered onside kick by Daniel Brown on a play Giants star receiver Odell Beckham Jr. did not dive for the loose ball. Then came a questionable pass interference call in the end zone against cornerback B.W. Webb with 0:3 to go.

“I'm proud of them for fighting to the end. Not every team will

do that,” Bears coach Matt Nagy said. “We've got a bunch of high-character guys that will fight till the end and that's a credit to them. We've got to figure out how to learn from this. This is part of that callus that goes on.”

Besides the Cohen pass on what appeared to be a sweep, the Giants saw Beckham throw and catch touchdowns, and Chicago nose tackle Akiem Hicks dive over on fourth down from 1 yard on a play made famous by Perry in the Bears glory days in the mid-1980s.

The Giants seemed to have it wrapped up when Rosas kicked a 37-yard field goal for a 27-17 lead with 1:49 to play. But the Bears rallied behind Daniel and several mistakes by the Giants, who were called for 12 penalties for 107 yards.

New York had two penalties on the tying drive, which featured a 23-yard, fourth-down pass from Daniel to Cohen to the Giants 9 with 11 seconds left in regulation.

Cohen finished with 12 catches for 156 yards.

Beckham said primary target Bennie Fowler was double covered and he was about to run until he saw Shepard.

“I saw him down the middle of the field and I was like, this



Seth Wenig/AP

New York Giants kicker Aldrick Rosas, right, is congratulated by Riley Dixon after kicking a field goal against the Chicago Bears during the first half Sunday in East Rutherford, N.J. Rosas also kicked a 44-yard field goal in overtime.

can't be real, and I just launched it to the end zone,” said Beckham, who has thrown two touchdowns this season.

SPORTS



Expand the Playoff

Changes to postseason haven't resulted in more diverse field » College football, Page 25

NFL: WEEK 12

Placing the blame

Pack, Rodgers bid 'adieu' to McCarthy; who's next?

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

There's little argument that Aaron Rodgers' talent is such that his Green Bay Packers probably should have won more than one Super Bowl by now.

For quite some time, there have been those who blamed coach Mike McCarthy for the lack of titles more than credited him for steering the team to that title.

Now the world will find out just what Rodgers and the Packers are capable of without McCarthy, who was fired after a 20-17 loss at home to the lowly Arizona Cardinals on Sunday that dropped Green Bay to 4-7-1, its worst start since 2006. It was an abrupt end for McCarthy — who did win a championship, after all — and

SEE NEXT ON PAGE 30



McCarthy

ANALYSIS

Firing was as much about culture as performance

BY BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

When a head coach gets fired during an NFL season, it's as much about the culture of his team as it is about performance.

That was the case in Green Bay, which in a

SEE FIRING ON PAGE 30



JEFFREY PHELPS/AP

A fan holds up a sign directed toward Packers head coach Mike McCarthy during the second half of Sunday's game against the Arizona Cardinals in Green Bay, Wis. The Packers fired McCarthy shortly after the 20-17 loss, which dropped Green Bay to 4-7-1, its worst start since 2006.

Inside:

- Rivers leads late Chargers drive for big win on the road over Steelers, Page 31
- Giants hold on to snap Bears' 5-game winning streak in overtime, Page 31

Bulls axe Hoiberg following 5-19 start » Sports briefs, Page 25

